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VALDA HÂNEM.

(THE ROMANCE OF A TURKISH HARİM.¹)

CHAPTER I.

MARGARET GREY had just come down from the flat roof of the palace, where she had been watching the flaming splendours of the November sunset over the Nile. She had been in Cairo for some days ; but the rain-clouds, which, since the extension of irrigation-works and other improvements under the British occupation, have become a common phenomenon in the Nile valley, had, since her arrival, spread a canopy of gray sky over the shining city, and this was her first glimpse of the wonderful effects of colour in an Egyptian sunset.

It was dying out now, and Margaret had come indoors, because she had been warned how dangerous it was to expose herself to any risk of a chill at this hour ; but in the West, behind the palm trees that fringed the further bank of the wide river, the sky was still glowing with bands of crimson and gold ; and from a jutting window of delicate lattice-work on the western façade of the palace, there was a glimpse of the sunset over the river,

with a white-domed mosque and a sharply pointed minaret standing out against it, which made an exquisite picture.

Margaret pushed open the little square lattice which was on a level with her eyes, and when she saw the picture thus framed, she uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Oh Valda Hânem ! How beautiful—how wonderful ! Do look !" she exclaimed, turning round as she heard a rustle of silk in the recess behind her.

The Pâsha's beautiful young wife, who often found the society of her little boy's English governess a relief from the chatter and laughter of the other ladies of the *harim*, had followed her to this quiet place, and she smiled gently at the foreigner's enthusiasm.

"I won't take your peep-hole," she said, speaking the French language in soft liquid tones that sounded musically strange. "See, I will open another, and then we can both look. It will pass away only too soon, like all beautiful things."

She unfastened another little square window in the lattice-work, and looked out to see what it was that made the English girl so eager, but the loveliness of the evening lights had a different effect upon her. She gazed at them long and steadfastly, until at last

¹ For convenience of pronunciation the Turkish names and words in the following pages have a circumflex accent placed over the syllable on which the accent should fall. Thus, *Hânem* (lady) rhymes, roughly speaking, with Barnum, *Pâsha* with lasher, *Hamîda* with Ouida, and *Harîm* with redeem.

Margaret was startled by the sound of a long-drawn sob, and turning quickly, she saw that her companion was gazing at the hills with her beautiful eyes full of tears.

"Dear Valda," she exclaimed in sudden distress, "what is the matter? Why do you cry?"

"I do not know," said the girl,—she was still quite a girl—trying to smile through her tears: "I am sure I do not know what it is that I want, but I feel that there is something."

"What can you want? Have you not got everything that you can possibly desire, a husband who is devoted to you, a beautiful little boy, and an affectionate mother from whom you are not parted, a splendid palace to live in, horses and carriages and slaves, magnificent dresses and diamonds, and many friends—dear Valda Hânem, what can you want more?"

The English girl was not much older than her companion; but her youth was passing with nothing to show for it, and the prospect that stretched before her was not a hopeful one. She had no claim upon anyone in the world, and everything that she possessed could have been bought for less than fifty pounds. The smile on her patient face as she spoke showed that she felt the contrast between them; but the greatest inequality of all was one that she did not mention. Margaret Grey had a sweet face, and she had still that bloom of youth which lends a charm to the plainest features; but only in the light of loving eyes could she ever have looked beautiful. Her gray eyes were as true as steel; she always looked as fresh and trim as if she had just come from her dressing-room; but her features were small, and her expression was intellectual rather than pretty; there was no symmetry of form or brilliancy of colour about her, and by the side of Valda's

glowing beauty she looked plain and insipid.

As the two girls stood together now, it was little wonder that Margaret should feel some sense of the contrast that they must present. Valda was going that evening to a Turkish wedding, and she had put on before dinner the gorgeous gown that the festivity demanded. Her dress was of deep rose-coloured velvet, simply made in European fashion with a plain skirt and a long, flowing train; but the closely fitting bodice was almost covered with diamonds, and it had a fairy-godmother effect which was not at all European. Such diamonds as these Margaret had never seen before. The single large stones that Valda wore as ear-rings were like great dewdrops flashing fires of prismatic colours; the splendid necklace round her white throat represented a whole year's income of one of the richest Pâshas in the Ottoman Empire; the aigrette that glittered in her hair was the memorial of a victory won by a soldier-ancestor in far off times; the massive clasp, in the design of the Turkish arms, which confined the lace at her bosom was another family heirloom, the gift of a grateful Sultan. Not a duchess, not an empress, in the whole of Europe could display more magnificent jewels than these; yet dazzling as they were, they were eclipsed by the beauty that they adorned.

As she looked at the slender girlish figure standing in her magnificent dress beside the open lattice-window that was filled with the rosy reflections of the sunset, Margaret was struck afresh with the marvellous beauty of the pale oval face with the great dark eyes and perfect features, and the golden hair which was such a veritable crown. Valda's waving hair was an inheritance from a Circassian great-grandmother, and its

soft and silky masses were of the wonderful deep golden tint that goes with the creamy complexion and dark brown eyes of a Circassian beauty. Hers was a loveliness of no ordinary type; yet she stood there in her velvet and her diamonds, as simple and unconscious as when she walked about the *harim* in her morning wrapper of blue cotton and yellow slippers; and the tears flowed down her cheeks.

Margaret had been sadly disillusioned by her experiences as a governess in England before she had found a refuge in the haven of a Turkish *harim*, and simplicity such as this was something new to her; she was strangely touched by it, and she felt for the beautiful weeping girl the sudden tenderness of a warm affection.

"God has given you many good gifts, Valda," she said gently, "and you ought to be happy. How many European ladies there are who would envy you!"

Valda had listened unmoved to the enumeration of her advantages; but the wistful smile which accompanied Margaret's last words went straight to her heart, and in the silence which followed, Margaret found her hand suddenly caught and imprisoned in a warm clasp of ardent sympathy.

"Ah Mademoiselle, dear, good, patient Mademoiselle!" she exclaimed remorsefully. "It is true, it is all quite true; and to you, you to whom the good God has not chosen to give any of these things, I must seem a wicked ungrateful creature. Perhaps I am, perhaps I am a monster, I feel it sometimes; and yet, yet there is something in me that longs, and sometimes I cannot keep it in. When I look at the moonlight or the sunset, or anything very beautiful, I feel it, that strange longing feeling. You remember at Constantinople, — you were with us there all the summer—

how I used to mount to the top of that high mound in the middle of our garden, and look at the sunset over the Bosphorus and the light in the sky behind the domes and minarets of the mosques? It always made me cry, and sometimes, when I am with you, I feel as if you could understand. Mademoiselle, you have told me of all these good things that I possess; but I would give them all, *all* in exchange for the free life that any common little shepherdess leads upon the hills. I declare to you, and I mean what I say, that I should be happier so. If I could, I would pass my life alone,—alone and free upon the hills, with no one, no one at all except my little Djemâl-ed-Din."

"And your husband?"

"Oh, my husband,—he might come if he liked,—I don't wish for any scandal. I should not mind him," said Valda indifferently.

"He is so devoted to you, he is so kind and good, such a gallant soldier and true gentleman! Surely you must appreciate him?"

"He is so short," said Valda with a sigh.

"Valda!"

"Don't be shocked at me, dear Mademoiselle," she said smiling, but looking a little ashamed of herself nevertheless, "but it was the first thing that struck me when I saw him. You know I had never seen him before we were married, nor he me, of course. I might have seen him; there was nothing to prevent me from looking through a window, or from a carriage when I was veiled, though he might not see me; but he was in Berlin when his mother proposed the match, and he only came home just in time for it. I had had no opportunity of seeing him; besides I knew that whatever he might be like, my opinion would make no difference. I was only fifteen, and I

had scarcely given up playing with my dolls. I had been told that he was handsome, and I was chiefly interested in my wedding-dress; that was beautiful, — ah yes, that was really beautiful!"

Valda paused, a smile of pensive pleasure lighting up her lovely face as she recalled a memory that was thoroughly satisfactory.

"What was it like?" enquired Margaret.

"It was a pale pink brocade of the very richest silk," she answered, "and it was covered all over with pearls in front. I knew that I had pretty hair, though my mother told me I was ugly, to prevent me from being vain; but when I tried on the dress, and looked at myself in the glass the day before the wedding, I was astonished. You must not suppose that I am vain, dear Mademoiselle. I know very well that I am nothing to look at now; but that dress did really suit me most wonderfully, and I was quite pleased with myself. Then it occurred to me to think what the Bey (he was not a Pâsha then) would think of me, and from that moment my pleasure and satisfaction in the wedding was gone. My heart began to quail, and when the day came, it quailed more. It was a dreadful day,—oh dear, it was a dreadful day! The papers had all been signed and the house was full of guests; the marriage was really completed, and I had never seen him. Then the moment came. I sat trembling on the bridal-throne, with an empty chair placed ready by my side for him, and he came quickly up the room, led by my father between the lines of guests. He came up the steps of the throne, and clasped a diamond bracelet on my arm, then he lifted my veil and looked at me. I was nearly fainting, but I gave one look, and I remember that was what I thought,—ah, he is short!"

"It was a strange experience to have to go through," said Margaret meditatively.

"It was miserable, miserable, my dear! And then afterwards, when the ceremonies were all over, when we had thrown our gold *piastres*, and they had all been picked up—when he gave me his arm to lead me through all the lines of guests, and took me to his own private suite of rooms, and closed the door, and I found myself alone with him, this dreadful, strange, short man whom I knew nothing at all about,—that was the most terrible moment of all!"

"What did you do?" asked Margaret.

"Do? I did nothing; there was nothing to be done. I just fainted quietly. I felt him catching me in his arms as I was falling, and then I knew nothing more until I found myself lying on the divan, and saw him bending over me asking passionately if I disliked him. Why was I so much afraid of him? What had he done to frighten me? Then I fainted again, and in the end he had to call in my mother and old Anâna. They scolded me well; but he never did, though it must have been rather mortifying for him. He was not young like me, but he told me afterwards that he had never been in such a state of mind in all his life."

"The poor Pâsha! And don't you care for him?"

"Oh yes! Of course I do. He is my husband, you see, and he is the only man I know except my father and my brother. With us, you see, there is no choice, and no responsibility. One accepts one's husband just as one does one's father or grandfather, or any other relation."

Margaret could not repress a smile. "It saves trouble in some ways, no doubt," she said.

"It is the decree of destiny, and

there is an end," said Valda resignedly. "And if a husband and wife do not agree, they need not see much of each other. In any case there is not so much opportunity for clashing as with you. We never go out together, and we move in perfectly different circles, he among the men, and I among the women; it must be much easier for us. And then we marry so young; I was only fifteen when I was married. Now I am twenty, and I am as much accustomed to him as I am to my brother. I think I like him almost as much."

"He deserves more than that from you, Valda. He loves you with all the strength of his nature, and he would worship the very ground upon which you stand if you would let him. You ought to be very thankful to be able to feel as certain as you do that he will never bring home a second wife to disturb your peace."

"He had better not!" Valda exclaimed quickly; "that is, unless he wishes to part with me. I should demand my papers of divorce in a moment if I found that he was thinking of another woman, and he knows that quite well!"

Margaret was for a moment a little taken aback. She knew what the Turkish laws of divorce were, but it was always a shock to her to be reminded of them, and she preferred not to touch upon the subject. She went on discreetly with her praises of the Pâsha. "He does not dream of anything of the sort, of course; he does not think of any woman in the world but you. Consider how he gives up every engagement to be with you, how he comes home early from every ball, every dinner, so as not to lose the evening with you. And when you were ill, for three days (don't you remember?) he sat with you without ever undressing—without ever moving from your bedside

except to give you your medicine. He insisted on doing all the nursing himself."

"Well, why shouldn't he?" demanded Valda. "I should have done the same for him if he had been ill, you know I should."

"Ah yes,—but a man,—men are so different. And it wasn't only when he was so anxious about you. When you were getting well, don't you remember that he stayed with you still all day, reading the paper, writing letters for you, telling you stories, and doing everything that he could possibly think of to cheer you and amuse you? Ah, Valda, I can assure you there are not many English husbands who would show such devotion."

"Are there not?" said Valda in surprise. "Allah, Allah! I am sorry to hear that! They look so delightful. I like the English gentlemen best of all; there is something about them,—I don't know what it is—something so fascinating. They are so very polite, so full of deference. I have often observed them, sitting on the back seat of the carriage, bending to speak to the ladies in the place of honour. I never think that the English ladies are quite worthy of them, though I much prefer them to the French ladies. But the English gentlemen—ah *mon Dieu!* the tall fair ones with the little blonde moustaches so well trained, and brave blue eyes,—how handsome and gallant they are! Ah, if destiny had given me to an Englishman! One of the distinguished ones I mean, of course, not any of those wild fellows that come every year with Cook, with their hats on the backs of their heads, and their faces all hot and red, and the long white rags of muslin on their hats flapping in the wind as they gallop in the sun like madmen on their donkeys. I don't like *that* sort!"

Margaret began to laugh in spite of herself. "Dear Valda Hânem, you should not talk like this; it is most foolish and unprofitable. But tell me, where have you seen all these English people?"

"Oh, here at Cairo; there are crowds of them here, and I see them every day when I drive out to Ghiseh or Ghesireh. You will enjoy yourself now that you have come to Cairo, for there are so many of your compatriots here, and you will go out and make friends with them, of course."

"I don't know," said Margaret rather sadly. "There are kind people here, no doubt, and I have introductions to some of them, but I don't know that I shall care to go out much. The society here is very gay, and I can never have any part or lot in it. I think I should be happier dreaming my life quietly away here, and forgetting all about the turmoil that goes on in the great city outside."

The lonely English girl looked wistfully out into the stillness and silence of the palace gardens. The swiftly falling Southern twilight was deepening into dusk among the shrubs and flowers, the marble fountains and mosaic walks; but the evening air came up laden with the scent of roses and jessamine and frangipani; and looking down past a clump of huge-leaved india-rubber trees, whose long pink buds were unfolding as if in promise of monster flowers, Margaret could see great hedges of white jasmine, and crimson hybiscus, and splendid purple masses of bougainvillia shining out of the shadow. Two stately lions of solid stone stood, as if on guard, on either side of the Turkish insignia carved in marble which crowned the archway of the palace gates, and beyond was the lovely landscape, a silvery crescent moon beginning to shine out above the graceful fans of a single straight-

stemmed palm-tree in the middle distance.

"We are safe and contented and happy in this quiet palace and these peaceful gardens," said Margaret; "but the life outside,—who can tell what it might contain?"

"Oh, my dear, you do not know what it is yet; when you do, you will not talk like this. You will like Cairo, I know you will; everybody does, and you will not be an exception. Even I am pleased when we leave Constantinople to come here, though of course it does not make much difference to me, — nothing makes much difference in our lives!"

She ended with a little sigh, and closed the windows; and as she moved away, Margaret saw that her beautiful eyes were full of melancholy.

CHAPTER II.

MARGARET sat in the garden of the *harim*, on a gay-coloured mattress in the shade of the mandalines, an unmistakably English figure in neat, navy-blue coat and skirt, and irreproachable collar and cuffs. It was close upon Christmas-time, and the orange and lemon and mandarine trees on every side of her had thousands of golden balls glistening among their dark green leaves. In and out of the closely packed shrubberies, a mosaic walk, set with white and blue and yellow pebbles, and bordered with a narrow ribbon of white marble, wound in a graceful floral pattern; and a few steps away, where a geometrical design like a rose-window formed the junction of several paths, a dark-eyed Circassian slave, in flowing white draperies that were loosely girded to her statuesque figure, was gathering the ripest of the fruit. Djemâled-Din Bey, the little four-year-old son of the Pâsha, stood near the slave, a charming little

figure in a shabby brown frock, and he was superintending with imperious insatiability the work of selection.

"*Choc, choc* (many, many)," he said urgently; "I want many."

It was in order that this child might learn English that the Pâsha had engaged Margaret Grey; but the little fellow was still very young, and he depended so much upon his slave-nurse, that the duties of a governess were very much of a sinecure. All that Margaret could do was to tell him little stories in English, whenever she could get him to listen, and to sit by while he played in the garden, and do what she could to prevent the slaves from spoiling him. Ayôosha, his nurse, was a most affectionate and well-meaning creature, but her notion of managing the child was to indulge him until he became utterly intolerable, and then to turn upon him in angry irritation. It was not a satisfactory method. The little fellow had a violent, self-willed temper, and under this system he was getting so tyrannical that he was becoming a terror and a nuisance to the whole *harâm*.

This morning the occupation of eating the first oranges of the season had kept Djemâl-ed-Din quiet, and he had been wonderfully good. Margaret sat on the cushions spread out in the shade, and idly studied the intricacies of the patterns on the path, while her thoughts were busy with the subject of her conversation with Valda the night before. What a strange girl she was, with her wonderful beauty of which she was so completely unconscious, and her quick receptive intelligence, her gentle manners, and her quiet melancholy. She knew nothing about Ibsen or the Zeitgeist, and for her the New Woman was not; yet from her tone and manner it almost seemed as if some subtle breath of the spirit of the age had

crept into the well-guarded *harâm*, and infected her mind. How else did it come that she felt this vague misery of discontent, this strange yearning for some intangible good that she could not define?

"It is not knowledge that she pines for," Margaret reflected; "she knows a great deal more than I do about the main interests of life. She has been married for five years to the Pâsha, who is a clever and enlightened man, and he tells her the things that are in his mind as well as what is in his heart. It is clear that he considers her his equal, morally and intellectually, and he consults her, and is willing to be influenced by her counsels. She knows all that, and she is fond of him in her way; she knows no other man, and has no desire to do so. Why is it that she is not happy?"

Margaret was still pondering over this problem when she was startled by a sudden commotion which arose at the far end of the walk. Ayôosha, the Circassian nurse, was gesticulating and chattering like an angry monkey, and the little Bey was standing with his fat legs wide apart, and his brow puckered into a most unchildlike frown, repeating over and over again: "*Yûsuf Effendi! Bâna ver Yûsuf Effendi, ver bâna!* (My lord Joseph! Give me my lord Joseph, give me!)"

Margaret jumped up, and went hastily along the walk between the orange trees. "What is the matter?" she asked judiciously. "Who is Yûsuf Effendi?"

Ayôosha burst into a flood of explanation in Turkish, and by the aid of a few tortured French words she at last made the governess understand that "my lord Joseph" had nothing to do with the matter, and that Yûsuf Effendi was only a name for mandarine oranges. It appeared that

Djemâl-ed-Din, having ascertained by personal experience that the oranges were no longer sour, as his nurse had assured him, had lost confidence in her judgment, and was not to be restrained from excess.

"How many has he already had?" enquired Margaret with some anxiety.

"*Dókus* (nine), Marmoselle," replied the nurse, holding up her slender hands with one thumb depressed to indicate the number nine. "*Éhvet éhvet!* (yes, yes)" nodding her head affirmatively, "*dókus!*"

"Nine oranges in one morning!" exclaimed Margaret in dismay. "Oh, Ayóosha, what were you thinking of? He will certainly be ill!"

The little Bey stood by, with his great brown eyes fixed under their frowning brows upon the arbitrator, and his golden curls shining in the sun. His first act when in a passion was always to tear off his cap and toss it into the dirtiest place he could see, and it lay now in a muddy pool under the orange-trees where the gardeners had been watering. Ayóosha perceived that he was making ready to roar, and knowing the consequences, she hastily slipped another orange out of its loose-fitting peel, and stuffed it into his hands.

"Take it, and don't cry, you naughty bad child!" she said with intense irritation; but it was too late. Already Djemâl-ed-Din had begun to yell, and the quiet place resounded with screams of "*káchuk Ana* (little mother)" until it might have been supposed that he was in mortal agony. In two minutes a slight figure in blue came out of the glass doors that led to the reception rooms of the *harim*, and, running down the flight of marble steps into the garden, Valda came hurrying to the rescue. This was always the end of every dispute with Djemâl-ed-Din, and as she invariably took his part and scolded the slaves,

he knew that he had only to yell in order to get his own way, and became every day more and more unmanageable. Margaret had found remonstrance and complaint alike useless, and she could only stand by, looking on with silent disapprobation, while Valda caught up the screaming child in her arms, and turned with flashing eyes upon the unfortunate Ayóosha.

"The child had already eaten more oranges than were good for him," Margaret said at last, feeling obliged to try to stem the torrent of reproach and blame. "Ayóosha was only trying to prevent him from making himself ill."

"But what folly to let him stay where the oranges are," said Valda indignantly. "I don't blame you, Mademoiselle. It is this foolish idiot of a woman who ought to have known that, when once he began to want the oranges, there was nothing to be done but to take him out of sight of them. He never cries like that with me, because he knows that if it is possible for him to have a thing, I shall never deny it to him. But these slaves have no tact, and no idea of managing him. No, Effën', you cannot have any more oranges, but *káchuk Ana* will get you something nice to look at, something very nice indeed, Djemâl-ed-Din!"

The little boy had stopped crying, and now looked up at his beautiful mother with a smile of anticipation shining through his tears. He threw away the orange that he held in his hand, and Valda looked at Margaret in triumph. "You see how good he is with me," her glance seemed to say; "I have no difficulty in managing him."

Margaret kept silence, but it was the silence of disapproval, and the steady gaze of her clear grey eyes impressed Valda as it had done from the beginning. It would have been easy of course for her to have gained

favour by assenting and siding with the mistress against the slave, and any one of the ladies of the *harim* would have done it; but Margaret's ways were not like theirs, and in her heart Valda recognised and respected the difference.

"I have not shown you my diamonds yet," she said hastily. "You said you would like to look at those I had on last night, but those are not all. We have got all our things unpacked now, my mother and I, and it will amuse Djemâl-ed-Din to see the jewels. I will bring them out here."

She went back to the house to fetch them, and presently returned, bearing in her hands a large rickety-looking box of white cardboard, with the cover gone and one side broken down.

"You haven't got your diamonds in there, Hânem!" Margaret exclaimed with a smile of irrepressible amusement.

"Yes, my dear; I have them here for the present, until I have time to arrange them in my cabinet. But you know I never have time; I hadn't all the weeks that we stayed in Scanderia."

"But at least you keep them under lock and key?"

"Well, no; I am afraid that I am rather careless. My mother sometimes scolds me. These have been on the divan in her room for the last two days, just like this."

Valda smiled as she sank into a cross-legged position on the cushions, and pointed to the treasures that she had in her lap in their mean case. The jewels were wrapped up, each in its separate little bit of ragged muslin or crumpled tissue-paper, and little Djemâl-ed-Din came up to stand at his mother's knee, and fixed a charmed gaze upon them as they were unwound.

"Surely it is rather rash with all these slaves about?" said Margaret.

"Do you think it is quite right to put such temptation in their way? Your jewels are enough to corrupt the morals of an archbishop——"

"An archbishop? I don't know about an archbishop, but the *kalfa* (slaves) one may trust. You see, they are in the family; they are not like servants. They remain with us; their wants are all amply supplied; they have no life outside the palace, and even if they could get out to dispose of anything that they stole, which would be difficult, what would be the good of the money to them? They want for nothing." It was true, and Margaret assented. The position of the slaves was so different from what her imagination had led her to expect, that she had suffered a complete reaction of ideas about them. "They have each of them a new dress every month, and as much underclothing as they care to make up. All their clothes are provided in abundance, and they have a liberal allowance of pocket-money; fifty *piastres* a month some of them get, and they cannot spend it. Why should they want to steal?"

"It would be very ungrateful certainly," said Margaret; "and I admit that there ought to be no temptation. Still human nature is weak, and these jewels are so splendid,—oh, they are beautiful!"

They were all out of their wrappings by this time, and they lay spread about in the sunshine,—tiaras, necklaces, aigrettes, and brooches in strange barbaric devices, all set with the glittering stones which flashed like coloured flames. They were all diamonds, and about their value there was no room for doubt. It was a princely fortune that was represented there, and Margaret marvelled as she looked; but she knew that in a dominion like that of the Ottoman Empire, where a man's fortune might

at any moment be seized upon and confiscated at the mere whim or caprice of a tyrant greedy of gain, jewels were a very natural and not unwise form of investment. The Turks buy up the finest diamonds in the European market; and a rich Pâsha will very often have the greater part of his savings stored up in the ornaments with which he loads his wife. If he should wish to realise, a little outlay in Palais Royal rubbish would speedily console her and deceive the outside world, and indeed the mixture of false with true is often so cleverly contrived that it is not easy even for intimates to determine the state of their friends' finances.

There was no Palais Royal trash in this glittering collection, however. Margaret, inexperienced as she was, could see that at a glance, and for the moment she was fairly dazzled by the show.

The blue Egyptian sky overhead, the brilliant green of the garden, and the palace walls of dazzling white which enclosed it, made up a scene not soon to be forgotten. The gardeners had been at their work of flooding with hose and syringe all the beds, and every leaf and flower was still glistening with shining drops of water. This central court of the palace was sacred to the inmates of the *harim*, and out of the rows of square windows which looked into it were to be seen the little bits of lace and muslin which the ladies washed for themselves and hung out to dry. The sunny air was perfectly still; but outside the high barrier of the walls, the picturesque tide of Egyptian life, quickened into intenser activity by the influx of English energy, rolled on unceasingly, and the busy hum and stir of it sounded in the distance like the murmur of the wind in the trees or the wash of the waves on a distant beach. Margaret thought of

the crowds hurrying along those busy streets, — pleasure-seekers, money-makers, and beggars of every nation and every clime — how little they guessed what was the scene shut in by the palace walls. Valda, sitting with her lap heaped up with diamonds, and the sunshine flickering through the leaves on to the wealth of her golden hair, was the centre of it, and it occurred to Margaret that the Pâsha did well to guard his treasures so jealously. He trusted her unreservedly, but she was very young to have the entire charge of jewels that were of so much value, and she was evidently inclined to be careless about them.

The little Djemâl-ed-Din, who was recovering from the satisfaction which the mere sight of so many pretty things had at first afforded him, was now beginning to clamour for some to wear, and his mother was ready to humour him in this as in all other things. With a soothing "*Pêkeh, Effên*" (very well, my lord), she fastened a splendid star, which was one of the most beautiful of them all, upon the breast of his shabby little brown pelisse.

"*Kâchuk Ana, I want much, choc, choc!*" said the little spoiled rogue.

"*Pêkeh Effên, pêkeh Effên!*" replied Valda, and, with pins that she borrowed from the slave, she dressed him up with clasps and stars, until the adornments of a Prussian cavalry-officer would have sunk into insignificance by the side of him. Then Djemâl-ed-Din, delighted with himself, called for his military cap and his sword, and strutted in slow and solemn state round the fountain, announcing that he was now a "*biâque Pâsha, (great Pâsha)*" and that he was going to conquer everybody.

Ayôosha followed him as in duty bound; but on her handsome face

there was a look of deep displeasure, and her black eyebrows were drawn together until they almost met. The interest which she had taken in the exhibition of the diamonds had for a moment dissipated the anger burning in her dark eyes; she had hung over them absorbed, but when they were given to Djemâl-ed-Din to wear, she had vehemently objected, and the cloud which returned to her face as her remonstrances were disregarded, hung heavier than ever upon her brow.

Valda Hânem looked after her as she marched sullenly after the exulting child, and an expression of vexation and resentment crossed her face. "Do you see how tiresome she is? She crosses the Bey in every particular, and she is annoyed if everyone else does not do the same. Really it is too much; I cannot stand it any longer. I will have her married to one of my husband's bailiffs in Armenia, and then I shall be rid of her."

"Oh Hânem, we should miss her very much," said Margaret in dismay. "She is very faithful and devoted, and she does everything for the child; you do not really mean it?"

"Yes, I do. I have been thinking of it for a long time, and Sacêda is now old enough to take her place. I know that there is a man whom my husband wishes to attach to himself, and I shall tell him that he may give him this girl as soon as he likes. We shall certainly not have had out of her the worth of the money that the Pâsha my father paid for her: it was seventy pounds in English sovereigns; but she has been with us for ten years of service now, and that is as long as one expects to keep a slave before marrying her off."

"Poor Ayçösha!" said Margaret regretfully. "She is so devoted to

the little Bey that I am afraid it will almost break her heart to part with him."

"A husband will console her," said Valda. "She will be glad enough to get married and to have a home of her own; and the Pâsha will provide her well with clothes and furniture. She deserves that, for I do believe she is really fond of the Bey. It is her one good point, but her temper is really too tiresome. Why should she be so sulky and disagreeable?"

"She is vexed that Djemâl-ed-Din should wear the diamonds, because she feels it such a responsibility to have to look after them," said Margaret. "When he gets hold of anything that he likes, he will sometimes stick to it for days, and insist upon having it under his pillow at night, so that there is no chance of getting it from him; and with objects of so much value as these, you know, Hânem, I think it is a risk. I do not think it is wise not to keep them under lock and key."

"Oh, everybody in the *harim* is quite honest," said Valda carelessly. "Besides Allah is great, and what Allah pleases will happen. Allah gave me my diamonds, and without his will they cannot be taken away from me."

Fatalism carried to such a point as this rather took away Margaret's breath, and before she could say anything, Valda had gathered up her diamonds, upon which Djemâl-ed-Din's raid seemed to have made little impression, and swept them back into the cardboard box. Then she gave a hasty exclamation, and snatching up a long strip of clear muslin that lay near her she covered her head and turned her face away.

"Here is Ivâss with Djemâl-ed-Din's dinner," she said, as a stout, swarthy Turk in full petticoat-breeches of dark blue cotton came

into sight, bearing a tray on his head. "Ours is ready too no doubt, and I had better make my escape to the other side before Djemâl sees me. Will you take him in with Ayôosha, Mademoiselle, and follow me as soon as you can?"

CHAPTER III.

It was a little late when Margaret came in for the mid-day meal, and the ladies, having already performed their customary ablutions, were seated at table devoting themselves to their soup in very business-like fashion. Two smiling dark-eyed Circassian girls were still in attendance, however, with a basin and ewer of massive silver, and Margaret, who had won golden opinions by the respect which she paid to national prejudices in small matters, held out her hands for water to be poured over them, and wiped them on a gold-embroidered, scented towel that was handed to her before she slipped into her place at the end of the long table.

A large party of ladies had come together for luncheon; but some were morning callers, and some were friends on a visit, and among them all there were only three whom the master of the house could ever see unveiled,—his beautiful young wife, her mother (a portly, and still handsome woman of fifty) and a very old woman (the mother's mother) who sat at the head of the table. The rest were all friends or relations of the family, who out of necessity or convenience availed themselves of the liberality of Turkish ideas of hospitality to make the house their home, but who would fly, screaming and hiding their faces in their veils, if the master of it chanced to come across them on his way through the *harim* to his wife's rooms. He was therefore excluded from the luncheon and dinner which were the only regular

meals of the day, and he dined with the other gentlemen in the *seldmlek*.

The *seldmlek* was the part of the palace which was appropriated by the men, and the doors which led out of it into the *harim* were always kept locked. The Pâsha had the keys, and the chief eunuch had one duplicate which would admit him into the living-rooms of the *seldmlek*; but no one else ever passed that way. His Excellency the Pâsha had to go through every day for his meals, and sometimes, as he went past the dining-room which opened out of the great central hall, he would look in to speak to his wife. Margaret heard his step approaching as she took her place, and there was a sudden commotion among the ladies, as there came a tap at the door, and his voice was heard outside, uttering the magic word *dêstur*. The literal meaning of the word is "custom," but it is used in the precincts of the *harim* as a warning cry to give notice of the approach of a masculine presence, and when strange ladies were near, even the Pâsha was obliged to announce himself in this way. With little shrieks and cries of pleasurable alarm and excitement, the ladies hastened to wrap up their heads in the first rag that they could lay their hands upon,—antimacassars, napkins, anything that came handy—and one very particular old dame of seventy, not finding anything that she deemed a sufficient shield, jumped up and made a rush to hide herself behind the window-curtain.

Then His Excellency opened the door, and holding it slightly ajar, so that he could just see his wife, he addressed a few rapid words in Turkish to her. He spoke too quickly for Margaret to be able to understand, but Valda's replies were simple, and she used the stereotyped forms that are for ever upon Turkish lips. "*Pêkeh Effên', Êhvet Effên', Pêkeh Effên'.*"

Pêkeh means very well, and *êhvet* means yes; and with these two words in combination with *Effên'*, which is an abbreviation both for *Effëndi* (my lord) and *Effënden* (my lady) Margaret had found it possible to go a long way in Turkish conversation.

The Pâsha, like most Turks of his class, was punctiliously polite and well-bred in his manner towards the ladies of his household, and Margaret noticed that his glance was steadfastly fixed upon his wife, and that he never permitted it to wander towards any of the ladies who were unknown to him. Hamida Hânem, the wife of a rich Pâsha in Cairo, who sat in the place of honour next to Valda, was a frequent visitor at the *harim*, and it seemed to Margaret that she rather enjoyed the opportunity of coquetting with her veil before the strange Pâsha. The law only requires that the Turkish women should have their hair covered up from the sight of men, and the delicacy of feeling that has impelled them to make a custom of hiding their faces as well did not seem to be strongly developed in Hamida Hânem. She evinced great interest in the conversation, and, turning her head to listen, allowed her muslin scarf to fall away from her face as if unconsciously, then suddenly remembering, she dragged it hastily forward so as to shield her profile from view. She repeated this manœuvre several times, and it was an amusing little comedy to watch; but it was lost upon the Pâsha, and his blue eyes only melted into a smile of amusement as he permitted himself to glance for an instant at Margaret, and saw in her face some reflection of the humour of the situation. He had come to tell Valda of an engagement he had just remembered that would take him out for the whole afternoon, and he wanted to know if she would be driving out, and which carriage she would like him

to leave for her. When this was settled, he withdrew, closing the door carefully after him, and the slaves continued their interrupted occupation of handing round the dishes.

It was a sumptuous meal that was served, and on grand occasions the table would be covered with the heads of flowers packed together in tasteful geometrical designs, and there would be as many as fifteen courses. To-day there were only ten; but they were very good ones, and Hamida Hânem congratulated herself upon having prolonged her call so opportunely. Lentil-soup, mutton-cutlets with green peas, broiled mutton in dice-like pieces on iron skewers, roast turkey with chestnuts, puffs of rich pastry with sweetened vegetable-marrow inside, a mutton stew with aubergines, stuffed tomatoes and asparagus, balls of puff-pastry floating in a clear white syrup of boiled sugar, and a semi-opaque jelly made of mandarine oranges,—this was the bill-of-fare, and last of all came *pilau*, the dish of rice which is the never-failing finish of a Turkish feast. The rice is boiled first, then mixed with oil, coloured pink, and baked in a large bowl of common brown earthenware, in which it is brought, smoking hot, to table; and a most appetising and satisfying dish it is,—the most effectual of all for inducing that plumpness of countenance and rotundity of figure which is considered so beautiful and desirable by Turkish ladies.

Unfortunately for Margaret her powers of appreciation were almost always exhausted long before the rice arrived upon the scene, and she found herself regarded with compassion as a poor little shrimp of a woman who could not eat, and who could therefore never hope to get fat. Valda tried in vain to persuade her to share with her some porter that an English lady had recommended.

"It is villanous stuff, certainly," Valda said. "It is black and hideous, and has a worse taste than any medicine; but that is no doubt why it is so efficacious. Madame Neville told me that there is nothing like it for giving one a fine figure, and I am resolved to give it a fair trial."

Valda therefore drank porter, and most of the other ladies had a little bottle of some special beverage recommended for their health placed beside them; but when they drank it they never forgot to screw up their faces and say "ugh!" so as to vindicate themselves as good Moslems, and to remind themselves and everybody else that it was only as medicine that they were taking it, and that they found the taste exceedingly nasty. Margaret was often the only person at table who abstained from doing violence to her feelings, and drank plain water.

On the present occasion she refused, as usual, about half the dishes that were brought to her, and she had leisure to observe Hamida Hânem, who was a subject truly worth studying. This lady, who seemed to be a more intimate friend than any other visitor at the *harim*, was in no danger of suffering from the wasting which was regarded as such a misfortune. She was an exceedingly stout woman of thirty with a face which might ten years ago have had the attractiveness of a certain *beauté de diable*. She had big eyes of a blue-gray steely tint under straight dark eyebrows, and her small, turned-up nose was not without a certain provocative charm of its own; but her face had grown puffy, her complexion had coarsened, and her hair, which looked as if it had not been combed for a week, was dyed yellow,—a terrible, dull tow-colour that did not suit her skin, and gave to her whole appearance an artificial effect that could

not fail to strike an unaccustomed beholder with something of a shock. She was dressed in a gorgeous Parisian tea-gown, carefully arranged so as to accentuate the exuberant proportions of her figure; and like so many owners of fine eyes, she was plainly quite convinced of her pretensions to rank as a beauty. Her manners at table were peculiar. She shovelled the food greedily into her mouth, pinching the meat off the bones with her fingers, and talking and laughing loudly with her mouth full, while her eyes travelled restlessly and observantly round the table. Several of the other ladies liked to disregard the knives and forks laid for them, and use their fingers instead; but they did it very delicately and deftly, wiping the rosy tips of their fingers continually on snow-white bits of wet muslin, and the action was not without a certain dainty grace. Valda, whose ambitions were all European, had taken careful observations of Margaret's manner of manipulating her knife and fork, and imitating that, and all the other little points of her behaviour at table, she had learned how to do everything with perfect refinement and propriety. The contrast between her and her guest was striking, and glancing from one to the other, Margaret could not help wondering what could possibly have been the attraction that had induced the friendship between them.

"What do you think of Hamida Hânem, Mademoiselle?" asked Valda, detaining Margaret as she followed her out into the hall when luncheon was over.

Hamida had gone out first. She had got through the courses before anyone else, and the moment she had done, she called to a slave to pour water over her hands into the silver basin, and waddled out of the room.

She was now reposing on a divân in the boudoir of the Hânem Effendi; but Valda seemed in no hurry to join her. She was more inclined for a little conversation with Margaret, and she lingered with her in the hall until the Circassians appeared with the coffee.

"Stay and drink your coffee with me, Mademoiselle," she said, taking a tiny cup of the thick brown mixture from a round tray with gorgeously embroidered hangings, that a slave was handing round. The cups were of the most delicate eggshell china, without handles, and they were poised like eggs in wineglass-shaped holders of jewelled filagree-work. Margaret made a remark about their beauty and quaintness as she took hers.

"Ah, never mind the cups," said Valda laughing; "it is not of them that you are thinking, I know, and I shall not allow you to make them an excuse for not answering my question. I saw your face when you were watching Hamida Hânem at luncheon, and I had great difficulty in keeping my countenance. It is true that her manners are terrible."

Margaret said nothing, but she made a slight grimace that was expressive enough, and Valda burst into a little ripple of gentle laughter.

"She shocked you, I saw; but you know she is considered a fine woman, and she has kept her figure wonderfully. It is a pity she is so self-indulgent that she will not wear stays. She gets the best sort from Paris, but she won't keep them on for more than half an hour at a time, so what is the good of them?"

"She comes here very often," remarked Margaret, "and you visit her a good deal, don't you? Do you find pleasure in her society?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Valda wearily; "one must fill up the time somehow, you see, and she is not

worse than the others. She is more amusing than most of them, for she knows a great deal; she knows good and evil."

"It is better not to know evil," said Margaret with the quietness born of entire conviction; "it is happier not to know it."

"Is it? Well, perhaps, but undiluted good is not amusing, and we lead such shut-up lives. When one's life is dull, one needs some occupation for one's fancy, and forbidden fruit is sweet. I don't want to taste it, of course, but it is amusing to know and hear about things. And Hamida Hânem is a clever woman in her way. She understands how to manage her husband, and she has more freedom than most of the Egyptian ladies even, who are far less strict than we are at Constantinople. Her husband, Mûrad Âli Pâsha, is a fool, and she profits by it. She is very emancipated indeed."

"But you would not wish to enjoy that sort of freedom?"

"Ah, no; at the price of having such a fool as Mûrad Âli for a husband, certainly not! And I do not approve of Hamida's ways,—don't imagine that I should ever wish to imitate her. Her stories amuse me for a time, but they only make me feel more miserable and discontented afterwards, and I don't really care for her society. I much prefer to be with you, dear Mademoiselle." Margaret set down her empty coffee-cup with an incredulous smile, but Valda went on eagerly: "I do indeed! It delights me to hear your interesting stories about happy English girls who may choose their own husbands, and enjoy all sorts of exciting experiences before they are obliged to marry and settle down. I only wish I could spend more time with you; but I have so little time for myself. The *hammâm* (bath) takes up a great deal

of the morning, and I have to cut out the dresses and look after the sewing of nearly the whole household, and in the afternoon my mother likes me to be with her, to go out driving, or to receive visitors. You know they often stay on until quite late in the evening, and then I am tired out and I have to sit with the Pâsha. You know how somebody is always wanting me?"

"Yes," said Margaret, "I have noticed that your time is fully filled up. You have not much leisure."

"If I could have you to go out driving with me sometimes instead of Nâzia Hânem," Valda said upon a sudden impulse; "she has not a word to say for herself the whole time, and I am so tired of her. But I couldn't ask you,—you would not like to wear the *yâshmâk*, would you?"

She looked at Margaret with an expression of shy appeal in her beautiful eyes. She was always very much afraid of exceeding her prerogatives, and she was careful not to make any demands that could possibly be objectionable to the English lady, but her eagerness about this was evident, and Margaret could not help responding to it with a smile.

"I should not mind in the least," she said; "why should I? The *yâshmâk* is not a bit thicker than many English veils, and it is most becoming and picturesque. I should

like to go out with you, and I think it would be an amusing experience to dress up as a Turkish lady."

Valda clapped her hands with joy. "Delightful!" she exclaimed. "We will go out this very afternoon! I wish I had known that you would not object, I would have asked you before. The Pâsha doesn't like me to drive out with anyone in European costume,—it makes one so much more recognisable—but now he will be pleased. What a good thing that he has left me the *coupé*. Hamida Hânem is not going to stay long this afternoon, and I will make my escape before any more visitors arrive. I will order one of the eunuchs to send word to the coachman, and you will tell Ayôsha to get Djemâl-ed-Din ready, won't you? It would be nice to take him with us."

"But the Pâsha," objected Margaret; "I haven't given him any English lesson this morning, and supposing he wants it this afternoon——?"

"He has gone out driving with some English officers to the Ghiseh Gardens, and he won't be back till late,—that was what he came to tell me at luncheon—so that is all right, my dear. And now I will go to Hamida Hânem; and will you see that Djemâl gets his sleep? Then as soon as he wakes, we will start."

(To be continued.)

THE AUTHOR OF "THE THREE MUSKETEERS."

IN the now distant days when the First Republic was about to pass into the First Empire, in the small provincial town of Villers Cotterets, on the high road from Paris to the Belgian frontier, there lived a retired General and his wife. The soldier (son of a French Marquis who had settled in St. Domingo and married a native woman) was one of those fine fighting men the Republic had produced so freely,—men like Hoche, Marceau, Pichegru, and Kléber, whose bravery and patriotism deserved better than to be overshadowed and crushed by the rise of Buonaparte. His wife was a pious orderly soul devoted to her husband and the care of the house. To this couple was born on July 24th, 1802, a boy whose vigour and vitality as an infant aptly preluded the strenuous fulness of his manhood. From his father (who died three years later) the child inherited a sanguine temperament, the instinct of great deeds, and a name which, originally assumed from a family quarrel, is now illustrious in three generations. From his mother he derived an element of religious feeling and reverence for holy things, together with a capacity for continuous work not always found in impetuous natures.

In the grand forest of Villers Cotterets covering fifty thousand acres, where the trees were still uncut and the wild boar was still hunted, the boy flourished like a young plant and ran about the impartial friend of game-keepers and poachers. Buffon's *NATURAL HISTORY* with coloured plates in one

friend's house, in another's a fine illustrated Bible, a Mythology, *THE ARABIAN NIGHTS*, and a *ROBINSON CRUSOE*,—these, together with solitary rambles in the great forest and constant visits to the cemetery where his father lay, combined to form the first impressions. They tried to teach him music but he was hopeless; arithmetic, but he could not master the multiplication-table. They tried to educate him for the priesthood, but rather than enter the Seminary at Soissons he ran away and hid in his beloved forest. He learnt a little Latin from one abbé, more shooting from another, and did a good deal of bird-catching on his own account.

Then came the crash of arms. It was 1814. The enemy entered France and swept through Villers Cotterets near which there was some fighting, and the boy had his first vision of battle, blood-shed, and fine uniforms. A year later the old Guard marched through and with them, a never-forgotten glimpse, Napoleon hastening to his last venture; a few weeks and then the same Napoleon again, the same sickly impassive face, hurrying back from the rout of Waterloo and the loss of his last stake. Thus childhood passed; the first act was over.

But the cupboard at home was bare, and the tobacco-shop, which since the General's death his widow had kept, yielded no great income. A stool in a notary's office offered something to do for a lad who showed no disposition to do anything in particular. Just then a chance visit to the theatre at Soissons, where the play happened to be Ducis's version

of HAMLET, revealed to the notary's clerk a world very different from that of the law. Friends from Paris brought glowing pictures of literary and dramatic life, and the fascination was completed by a brief stolen visit to the capital, an evening at the Théâtre Français to see Talma playing SYLLA, and an interview with the great man in his dressing-room surrounded by celebrities. Imagination, fed by desultory reading and an untrammelled life, now became purpose; ideas, formless and void, now shaped themselves into an ambition not (as might have been expected) of acting but of authorship. The youth was persuaded he had found his vocation; it was more difficult to impart this persuasion to his friends, but the mother yielded (as mothers do), the notary was rather relieved to be rid of his good-for-nothing pupil, the townsfolk smiled and shrugged their shoulders, and Alexander, at the age of twenty, set out to conquer the world. Thanks to General Foy, an old friend of his father, and to the possession of a fair clerly hand the youth obtained a small post in the household of the Duc d'Orléans. Forty-eight pounds a year, if not affluence, at least represented duties which left many spare moments. The time was utilised in self-education. Italian and German were resumed; Scott, Byron, and Fenimore Cooper were perused. Attendance at the theatres was a necessary instruction in dramatic rudiments, while visits to La Charité and the friendship of students supplied a foundation in anatomy and medicine. A beginning of business was made with two slight vaudevilles written in partnership with friends and ultimately accepted at the Ambigu Comique and the Porte St. Martin. Four years thus profitably employed closed with the greatest illumination of all, the

presentation of Shakespeare's chief plays by a company of English actors who visited Paris in 1827.

The epoch of production now began. Here it should be carefully noted that this young man, uneducated in the ordinary sense, had discovered a wonderful, in its degree a unique, gift of nature, the gift of assimilation. He listened, he observed, he read, and nothing was lost; he absorbed quickly and permanently. But he did more; memory was only one factor in the process of assimilation. The thoughts and words of others passing into his brain transformed themselves as in a crucible and came out again, in substance compound, in language indifferently his own or other people's, but distinguished always by a kind of dramatic moulding, the special contribution of himself. And as the most perfect digestion is the most unconscious, the subject of this mental process, though he knew it to exist, rendered no strict account of it to himself and recognised only its most general manifestations. Of these the first and most imperious was the necessity of self-expression. The moment could not have been more opportune. The air was charged with many contagious ideas; in many minds were the same thoughts, the same words on many lips. It must have been difficult for the most original spirit to preserve its originality, and what was to happen to the spirit of assimilation? Was it not bound to catch these ideas as readily and as plentifully as young blood takes and develops all floating germs? Scott had revealed the charm of history disguised in fiction, Shakespeare had shown the power of drama freed from rule and tradition. It needed only a casual visit to the Salon, an aroused curiosity, and a short reference to the articles on Christine and Monaldeschi in the Dictionary of Biography, to fashion

a tragedy in passable verse good enough to be accepted by the Théâtre Français. But accidents and disputes among actors intervening, the production of *CHRISTINE* was deferred, so that its author withdrew the manuscript and re-wrote the play for later representation in its present form.

Meanwhile he was not idle. A stray volume of Anquetil (the dullest of eighteenth century chroniclers) and a page or two from some ancient Memoirs provided the raw material, passages of Schiller and Scott suggested effective scenes, and the result was *HENRI III. ET SA COUR*, a drama which not only made the author's name, but served (with all due deference to Victor Hugo, be it said,) as the first tangible embodiment of Romantic principles. These early plays are examples of present ability as well as signs of the future. To be acquainted with them, especially with *HENRI III.*, is to see in advance how the assimilative faculty and the theatric touch could deal with and transform matters of history or fact. Dictionaries and chronicles were always at hand, but the man who so dexterously manipulated them may be said without much exaggeration to have appeared at the outset as fully equipped for his peculiar task as Pallas Athene when she sprang from the head of Zeus. Other instances soon followed of the same process applied to drama in *CHARLES VII.* and *NAPOLEON*, to history in *GAULE ET FRANCE* and the *CHRONIQUES DE FRANCE*, to travel in the *IMPRESSIONS DE VOYAGE*. Besides the historical, there were two other tendencies of the Romantic spirit ready to be absorbed. One, coming from German influence, was the wild and fanciful, of which the chief exponent was Charles Nodier, and among the younger men Prosper Mérimée. To be fascinated by this vein is more

easy than to work it successfully, as *DON JUAN DE MARANA* bears witness. The other tendency, derived from Byron, was the glorification of passion. To this we attribute *ANTONY* and *LA TOUR DE NESLE*. Such, in brief, was the work which, in the first decade of his literary career, brought celebrity to the name of Alexandre Dumas. To no part of it, strange to say, did he owe his reputation so much as to the *IMPRESSIONS DE VOYAGE*, the first book (he has told us) which led the Parisian public to discover that he possessed the all-important quality of *esprit*.

Popularity was not slow to provoke hostility, in two ways. The old school naturally detested the upstart ring-leader of a reckless revolt. No true Classicist could ever forgive *HENRI III.* or the devils' dance round the bust of Racine. Then there were other enemies, less conscientious but not less bitter, who begrudged a renown lightly won and ostentatiously enjoyed. Hence arose an organised league for the demolition of Dumas. The attack was opened in 1833 by M. Granier de Cassagnac in the columns of the *JOURNAL DES DÉBATS*. It was partly a display of the patent obligations of Dumas to past authors, partly a depreciation of his talents. Dumas replied briskly enough in the pamphlet *HOW I BECAME A DRAMATIST*. He acknowledged his debts frankly, and so he did well: had he stopped there his position would have been impregnable; but provoked by the personal animus of his assailants he went further than was necessary or judicious. His references to the borrowing propensities of Shakespeare and Molière, however pertinent logically, were a mistake of tactics since they enabled his adversaries to infer a general comparison which he had never meant to invite, though with later audacity he braved it in his

collocation of Shakespeare and Dumas. Equally rash, as addressed to opponents without an adequate sense of humour, was his famous dictum, "The man of genius does not steal, he conquers," a phrase which supplied scoffers with a weapon destined to become blunt by excessive use. But such inflation of language must be discounted by the gratuitous nature of the attack upon a man who had never claimed to be an original genius. One extreme provokes another, and, of the two, that into which Dumas fell was certainly nearer the mean and the truth. He might have contented himself by replying that the point of originality on which, apart from verbal adaptations, Messieurs de Cassagnac, Loménie and the rest laboured so much, was mainly an affair of definition, since there is obviously one originality of the man who propounds ideas and another of the man who compounds them, just as the essence of each single idea differs from the essence of these ideas in composition. How far it is a reproach to be called a skilful adapter of other people's ideas depends on the nature of the skilfulness; but it was somewhat absurd to vilify Dumas for his skill in arranging other men's thoughts, and in the same breath to abuse him for his clumsiness in putting them together. The controversy, though as a matter of literary history it can hardly be ignored, has of course little present interest. In a general way we are less vehement or more liberal on questions of genius and talent; and in particular we cherish a conviction that, though now, as fifty years ago, there are plenty of people seeking the effective "arrangement of ideas," whether their own or others', yet the particular person who could do this as Dumas did has neither yet appeared nor seems likely to appear.

From this futile struggle, which dragged on for nearly two years, the curtain rises on the prosperous and prolific epoch which succeeded. Dumas did not exactly desert the field of strong emotions in which his early successes had been won, for he never deserted any good idea, cherishing it and returning to it and developing it again in the same or some other form, this terrible plagiarist who borrowed not only from others but from himself; just as, not to mention the Musketeer cycle, he returned to HENRI III. in *LA DAME DE MONSOREAU*, to ISABEL DE BAVIÈRE in *LA REINE MARGOT*, to the CHEVALIER D'HARMENTAL in *UNE FILLE DU RÉGENT*. Without relinquishing therefore the Romantic vein Dumas now combined his wit and his stagecraft in producing those delightful comedies of intrigue of which *MADMOISELLE DE BELLEISLE*, *UN MARIAGE SOUS LOUIS XV.*, and *LES DEMOISELLES DE SAINT-CYR* are specimens. But the theatre was only one, and a too narrow outlet for his multitudinous energy. A wider channel lay open in that universal taste for fiction which has always distinguished the inhabitants of the French capital. This channel had the advantage too of being a double one; there was the story in the *feuilleton* of the daily paper, and the completed story at the bookseller's. Not greed or even ambition, but the irrepressible instinct of the born story-teller led Dumas into that particular path of literature wherein his special fame was to be. Every incident of his own life, every incident gathered from the books or conversation of others assumed to him the form of a dramatic narrative. He told stories as naturally as other people chronicle facts; he regarded what had been merely as falling under the superior category

of what might have been. The commonplace had no existence for him. No human being to his fancy ever appeared as simply putting on his boots, or walking, or sitting down to dinner. These poor unadorned facts just served to evoke attendant possibilities. A happy kind of colour-blindness, one might call it, which, excluding all dull and neutral tints, admitted only the most brilliant prismatic hues. Gifted with this splendid mendacity, the genius of the true romancer, Dumas at once outstripped all rivals,—of whom but two could properly be considered such, Eugène Sue and Frédéric Soulié—and became the undisputed king of the *feuilleton* at a time when that institution was at its greatest glory. In quick succession came *LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES*, *VINGT ANS APRÈS*, *MONTE CRISTO*, *LA REINE MARGOT*, *LES FRÈRES CORSES*, *LE CHEVALIER DE MAISON ROUGE*, *LA DAME DE MONSOREAU*, all within three years or so. Truly a royal prodigality! Yet never was king less of a tyrant. Egotistic in the most harmless and transparent way, Dumas did not for a moment consider himself the sole repository of good things. "I am," he said, with more than sufficient humility, "the vulgariser of ideas." Anxious to do all and capable of all, it was physically impossible for him, working day and night, to supply alone the many demands that poured in. Naturally therefore he availed himself of services readily offered in a country where collaboration was quite usual, and offered in this case all the more readily because of the many struggling or rising authors who jumped at the double chance of securing a market for their products and a training in the school of success. They came of their own accord, they stayed as long as they liked, and they

went at their will, without any compulsion or monopoly. No doubt these helpers were useful to Dumas, especially for the exigencies of fiction delivered in daily instalments, a condition which obviously admits much editorial direction and supervision; but it is equally to be remembered how much, directly and indirectly, the subordinates owed to a principal whom they certainly did not join for the philanthropic object of supplying his deficiencies.

A familiar vision rises before us of the large hearty man working away at full steam, coat, vest and collar discarded, shirt-sleeves rolled up, finding enormous pleasure in his work, and ever and again roaring with laughter at the fun of the story he was writing. Round this burly form of physical and mental vigour flit at intervals, like the shades round Æneas, the thin ghost-like shapes of smaller men who wrestled with ideas and were perplexed, bringing with them, the one a plot, the other a suggestion, here a dialogue, there a *dénouement*. For each the master mind was ready. Improving what was good, re-making what was bad, fertilising what was barren, he set all these puppets in motion, holding the strings of each, taking a turn now with one now with another, himself equal to anything and everything. The picture thus called up is a pleasant one and capable (as Thackeray long ago pointed out) of much humorous development. Unhappily it lent itself also to malicious disfigurement. The enemies of Dumas, who had not become fewer as time went on, set themselves to create a scandal. They found an agent or spokesman in a certain person who, having discarded his own humble patronymic and taken to himself a fine-sounding aristocratic name, came forward as the purifier of literature and the champion of

oppressed authors. It is easy to persuade men that they are ill-used, and it needed only a little judicious pressure to convince Dumas's assistants, or some of them, of the following undoubted facts which out of pure Quixotic unselfishness they had, it appears, previously omitted to notice,—that they had done far more work than he, that they were the real authors of the books published under his name, and that they therefore, not he, deserved the chief share of glory. These points being settled, it remained to let the public know that Alexandre Dumas was a heartless swindler who gained his living by grinding his fellow-creatures, that he had no brains of his own, and was utterly incapable of writing a readable book. Such was the chivalrous spirit and such the convincing logic which, intermingled with all kinds of scurrility, animated the *FABRIQUE DES ROMANS* and the sketch by the same hand in *LES CONTEMPORAINS*. These wonderful revelations, when you have been through them, and tested their evidential value so far as is possible in dealing with a necessarily intangible subject, amount in the end not to the destruction of an individual, but to the exposure in sensational style of a loose and unsatisfactory system. Literary collaboration, except on a fixed and pre-determined basis, is pretty sure to generate disputes and ill-feeling. Dumas was the worst possible man of business, and we are not concerned either to defend the rashness of his haphazard engagements, or to maintain that he invariably was right in his dealings with subordinates. The point is that he fell into a system (originated by Scribe), the blame for which ought to be imputed not only to the author who signs, but equally to the assistants who do not, and more than

either perhaps to the editors, publishers, and theatrical managers with whom the commercial value of a name transcended every other consideration. But this laxity, however reprehensible, does not touch our estimate of Dumas's genius or the essential authenticity of all his greatest works; *essential* in the way that the differentia of a thing is its essence. Let Maquet have written parts of the Musketeers' story, let Fiorentino have counted for something in *MONTE CRISTO*, let Mallefille and the rest have had their share in other books; we are still confronted with the eternal question,—how comes the difference so marked and so universally admitted between the works of these gentlemen in collaboration with Dumas and the works of their own unaided doing? The answer can only be that the greatness of this difference is the measure of Dumas. To account for the amazing productiveness of this period, I know no better theory than that of a rapid and extensive dictation, a method which would often leave gaps to be filled in, a method which a less fertile brain could hardly essay, but one in which the great story-teller would revel as he spun the threads of his different yarns. Is it possible, too, that Dumas, when he prefixed to one of his publications that much-derided motto *Dieu dicte et moi j'écris*, was not merely indulging in a characteristic Dumasism, but was reproducing an idea of inspiration familiar to his mind and suggested by his own relations to collaborators? But whether this explanation be preferred or some other, it matters little. Time, co-operating with equity and reason, has long since levelled down to its proper proportions a molehill which malice tried for a while to elevate to a mountain.

Before, however, we part finally from this controversy and the other which preceded it, it may be interest-

ing to apply to each a simple concrete test. In regard to the first charge, roughly speaking that of using as his own the brains of dead authors, it may be timely to cite that greatest of his romances, the interest of which is so conspicuous at the present moment. We happen to know pretty exactly the sources of the Musketeer stories, which may very handsomely be stated thus: for the idea of an historical novel, Sir Walter Scott; for the idea of four brother-like adventurers, the old twelfth century romance *LES QUATRE FILZ AYMON*; for certain elements in D'Artagnan's character, the model of Don Quixote; for the principal names, some incidents, and the general historic background, the *MÉMOIRES D'ARTAGNAN*. The latter is of course the chief of the sources. As Dumas referred to it in his preface (mentioning at the same time by way of mystification a certain imaginary Memoir of the Comte de la Fère), and as a condensation of the D'Artagnan Memoirs by Eugène d'Auriac was published in Paris just after *LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES* and *VINGT ANS APRÈS* had appeared, the enquiring mind has had no difficulty from the first in judging the extent of Dumas's indebtedness. It may safely be said that no one who has been at the pains to do this can have risen from his study without a vastly enhanced opinion of Dumas. To have animated the rather dry bones of Sandras de Courtilz is a proof of the highest creative capacity.

To confute the point of the second charge, that of a success solely due to the work of others, it is sufficient to bring forward a book of which the sole authorship was never questioned, a book which is itself a monument of literary talent. Not the bitterest enemy ever alleged that any other hand than Dumas wrote his Memoirs; and *MES MÉMOIRES* contain in them

every quality which the most ardent admirer can discern in the novels. For supposing the authorship of *MONTE CRISTO*, *LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES*, and the rest to be absolutely unknown, yet possessing *MES MÉMOIRES* we should possess evidence of the very qualities with which our fancy would invest the author of those romances. Therefore we accept with pleasure the only hostile criticism to which Dumas's wonderful account of his father, himself, and things in general has ever been subjected, content if its exact veracity be doubted by reason of the brilliant imagination of the writer. It is not from a love of archaeology that I refer to this subject, but partly because the question can no more be ignored in writing of Dumas than the Homeric question in writing of Homer, and partly because (except for a rather inadequate version of a portion of *MES MÉMOIRES*) the only professed narrative of the great man's life existent in English, if indeed it still exists, must be described either as an egregious parade of unsifted scandal, or at best as a mere compilation of the more or less amusing gossip freely circulating round a character which gave itself away with the simplicity of a child. It is not however the child, but the genius of the child that demands consideration.

We have now, dramatically speaking, reached in Dumas's career the close of the third act, an act generally critical and often one that might best have ended the play. Let us, at any rate, assume an interval in which to recall a familiar glimpse or two of the romancer in practical life. Think of him, for example, realising for a brief space, within the commemorative walls of the Château Monte Cristo, all that lavish disposal of wealth and luxury his imagination had conceived, surrounded by his ivory, apes, and

peacocks, entertaining high and low, rich and poor, prodigal of gifts, confident of repairing the waste of to-day by the labour of to-morrow. Or see him as he rushes to a rehearsal at the Théâtre Historique, that theatre constructed on a new and quite impractical plan, and intended to provide France and the world with a liberal interpretation of history. He has come from his friend the Duc de Montpensier, and he is discoursing his other friend the stage-carpenter. The Duke and the plebeian have both contributed ideas. Certainly that tableau might be improved; there are forty minutes to spare; he sits down and re-writes it. At this interruption of rehearsal the actors are amazed, Mélingue rather cross, Mme. Guyon rather sulky. "What a man he is!" they say, but before grumbling is over the man has re-appeared, the tableau is re-written, and Dumas is off to do his three *feuilletons* for the next day. It was at the Théâtre Historique that MONTE CRISTO spread itself over two nights and that LA JEUNESSE DES MOUSQUETAIRES,—the author's own adaptation of LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES, the first and by far the best of its many stage-versions—was enacted with a success which Théophile Gautier called "Californian," an ill-omened word, for the theatre, like the château, was destined to consume more gold than it brought.

At another time the hero appears as a man of war, a valiant D'Artagnan among the barricades in 1848, a hungry and thirsty Porthos when the day is over and, "I gulp down a bottle of Bordeaux and swallow off a bowlful of chocolate." Or again, it is the fancy to be a politician that seizes him as it did Victor Hugo and other of the Romantics. He harangues the electors in a wonderful speech, justifying his own Republi-

canism, though he was the Marquis de la Pailletterie and had been the secretary of the Duc d'Orléans; but he did not convince them that he was the proper man to be their deputy. It mattered little; he was well aware that neither he nor politics had lost much thereby. And then his travels in foreign lands, his adventures as a sportsman, his relations with Garibaldi, his debts and his difficulties,—all these have been told and talked of a hundred times. The notable thing is that, wherever you find Dumas, or whatever doing, he is still and always the romancer. No incident in his middle or later life can be picked out, of which you can say, "Here is the man himself as distinct from the man in his profession." The distinction does not exist. Metaphorically we speak of other men as absorbed in their work and identified with it; with Dumas it is literally true. Twenty years of constant converse with the immense and the improbable, with startling scenes and effective situations, had ended in a singular fusion of the ideal and the practical, most interesting psychologically but by no means convenient in daily affairs. To call him *farceur*, *blagueur*, etc., is merely to state this truth in an offensive way, just as it is only a hopeless person who doubts the sincerity of Dumas's grief at the death of Porthos.

Let us now resume the fourth act of his career, and enter upon a period beginning about 1850 which his critics have usually considered one of decadence. No doubt the tide of popularity had begun to ebb for most of those who had been prominent in the fervid literature of the past twenty years. Whatever the force of such re-action, Dumas, most of all men, was bound to be affected by it. He had never heightened his value by rarity; there was no reserve

of strength, no economy of effort about him. Yet it would be hazardous to assert that a talent less ingenious or less fertile than before is shown in books like *ISAAC LAQUEDEM*, *LA TULIPE NOIRE*, *LE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE*, and *MES MÉMOIRES* (the greater part of which were written after 1850). The river, its source undried, still flowed on, though the people no longer jostled one another in their eagerness to drink it. What must be said is that the river had now broken up into many streamlets, some of them rather insignificant. All those prefaces, those translations, those editions of other people's Memoirs,—we could have done without them or most of them; nor should we have thought less of Dumas if his journalistic record had been wanting, and the *D'ARTAGNAN*, *LE MOUSQUETAIRE*, and other sheets had never run their brief expensive course. All these things might have been otherwise. Dumas might have been, of course, jealous of his fame, critical of his work, fastidious of the future. In that case he would have been like other prudent authors, but he would not have been the Dumas we know,—the phenomenon, the man who was proud of his quantity, the man who started life by saying "I live now by my penmanship, but I mean in future to live by my pen," and who carried out this purpose in his own wholesale, regardless fashion. Nothing is easier, moreover, than to exaggerate the inferiority of this miscellaneous mass. One ought rather to be surprised at the readable quality of it all, the invariable absence of dullness, and the constant charm of a story, whether old or new, always well told. You pick up, for example, one of Dumas's less-known works, say *LE FILS DU FORCAT*, and open it at random. You get interested in M. Coumbes Millette and Pierre Manas,

with the result that you go back to the beginning and then on again to the end. Meanwhile possibly the latest volume of current fiction, which it was your duty and intention to read, has lain neglected on the table, and it is all the fault of that fatal Dumas. It is to him again that we owe principally our knowledge of Talma, Napoleon's friend, the great actor of the Revolution and the Empire. There is much about Talma in *MES MÉMOIRES*, and after his death who but Dumas should collect the scraps of biography and publish them as the Memoirs of Talma, an important contribution to the history of the stage as well as a grateful acknowledgment of early kindness? It would be a pity therefore to despise without discrimination the minor works of the great Dumas,—the sparks that fly at random from his mighty anvil.

Now come to the last act, a short and rather sad one. Dumas had in a way bounced through life. He had spent four or five fortunes, he had written four or five hundred volumes, he had touched the height of prosperity and very nearly the depth of adversity. Through all vicissitudes he had been gifted with splendid health; not a day's illness in the ordinary sense had marred his vigour. It is recorded by M. Blaze De Bury, whose semi-physiological study of his friend first struck the proper keynote for the appreciation of Dumas, that in later years he became subject to a strange kind of fever recurring about once a year and lasting two or three days during which he lay prostrate with his face to the wall, taking no nourishment except occasional sips of lemonade, until the fever worked itself off. This was the only sign of physical revolt ever discernible in a constitution which, though not exactly injured by riotous

living, must have been fully strained by the racket of ceaseless action. Then suddenly the collapse came, with common symptoms of a failing brain, clearness of past things, oblivion of the present. It was 1870, and Paris was no place for euthanasia, so the old man was moved to his son's house at Puy, there to be tended with loving care by that best of sons. Gradually he sank. It was a long dull torpor with times of uneasy rest,—nightmare visions of countless books rising up pyramid-like, then tottering and falling, uncertainty of self, reproachful thoughts of what might have been. Now and then there were flashes of the old lucidity and eagerness. One such occasion is well known. The thought, *non omnis moriar*, had been vexing him in secret, changing from hope to doubt, from doubt to despair. At last he forced it into words. "Tell me," he said to his son, "tell me on your soul and conscience, will anything I have written survive?" The conviction of truth coincided happily with filial piety to prompt an answer which cheered the father's heart. In a few days he passed away,—his death hardly noticed amid the din of battle—and was buried near Puy. So soon as it was possible, fifteen months later, knowing what his wish had been, they took his remains back to Villers Cotterets, and laid them in the old cemetery his childhood had known so well, that the end might be equal to the beginning.

"Will anything of mine survive?" The question is superfluous. Yet it is worth observing that few authors have had their vitality more severely tried. Besides the warfare of his lifetime he has had to undergo a certain superior tone of toleration which anyone may have noticed in the literary articles of French magazines during the last twenty or thirty

years. If mentioned at all it is with an air of gracious patronage as one no doubt a sufficiently good amuser of children but not seriously to be considered in the hierarchy of Literature. That an author should hold his own against hostility is not surprising, but that he should survive so much condescension is little short of miraculous. Dumas has fared better, of course, in this country where his merits have been proclaimed by men like Thackeray in the past, by Mr. Swinburne and many other good judges among the living. Still even with us the superior tone may be found at times, and it is not many years since a Quarterly Reviewer could find nothing better to say of him than that he was a "frivolous doubter,—a purveyor of fiction which he did not write—a tawdry mock-heroic imitator of Walter Scott," and so forth. On the whole then, neither here nor elsewhere, neither alive nor dead, has Dumas owed much to the higher criticism. On the other hand (as the translations, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and the multiplied editions of his principal works testify) he has had the more substantial advantage of being read in the four corners of the earth, and that not only spasmodically, as might happen at the present time, but with a steady persistence untouched by the changes of literary fashion. The reasons for this persistence of Dumas might fill a volume, but they must be reduced now to a few plain propositions.

In dealing with the primary emotions he worked on a material little affected by differences of position or education. Most people at some time crave for the wonderful and the sensational; MONTE CRISTO appeals both to the philosopher and the housemaid. It matters not how much their impressions of it diverge;

they have both been touched at some common point, probably that need of occasional desipience which Horace long ago observed to be an instinct of human nature. The popular if vulgar ideas of Wealth, Power, Justice, or its "wilder kind" Revenge, have never had a more skilful manipulator than Dumas. One or other such abstractions may be noticed as the foundation of his most popular works. MONTE CRISTO stands for several, a human Providence operating by effective contrast amid ordinary circumstances; JOSEPH BALSAMO represents Magic and Fate; LE CHEVALIER DE MAISON ROUGE, Love and Loyalty; LES TROIS MOUSQUETAIRES, Crime and Retribution, in the person of Milady; VINGT ANS APRÈS, in the person of Mordaunt, Vengeance and Nemesis. The man who used these themes with no moral purpose in view, but for the simple sake of entertainment, offers us a perpetual refuge from the dulness or troubles of life in spheres where the improbable only just stops short of the impossible. With the exception of MONTE CRISTO,—one of the best-known, if not the best, of his novels and at any rate a marvellous *tour de force*—the chief romances of Dumas are set in a frame-work of history, an alliance the value of which Scott had first shown. But with Sir Walter Romance was the handmaid of History, with Dumas History existed for the benefit of Romance. The one was spiritual, the other ethereal; the one used his qualities of poet and student to enrich fiction, the other used his unrivalled dramatic instinct to enliven history. The admirable thing about Scott was that his seriousness never spoiled his imagination, about Dumas that his levity did so little harm to his facts. It is true that he treated history in a free and easy

fashion, *les manches retroussées*, and that in details he assumed a licence of invention regulated only by his conception of the principal characters and their surroundings. Yet by intuition, it seems, he reproduced these surroundings,—the age of the last Valois sovereigns for example or that of Louis the Thirteenth—with rare felicity and with admitted fidelity. And as to his great personages it must be for experts to decide how far Henri Trois, Catherine de Médicis, Richelieu, Cromwell, Marie Antoinette have been distorted. Dumas's view of them was generally the popular and traditional one, which is not always incorrect. His witty, but perhaps best unquoted, reply to Victor Hugo's accusation of having violated History illustrates his own somewhat incurious attitude on that point. But for the less indifferent conscience of an un-Romantic age it is pleasant to believe that our judgment has not been seriously perverted by certain early and ineffaceable impressions which we owe to the brilliant pages of Dumas.

His superficiality has often been remarked, but there is one point about it which should not be overlooked. No one has accused Dumas of profundity; width not depth was his characteristic. "I am all above-board (*Je suis tout en dehors*)" he said of himself, indicating thereby his distaste for mental analysis or subtle distinctions. In all respects the very antithesis of Balzac he is so especially in this, that, while the feeling left by any one volume of the COMÉDIE HUMAINE is that of a subject completely exhausted, the effect of Dumas is rather to open out prospects by a suggestiveness which, if it disappoints our reason, attracts and stimulates our imagination. With imagination, that precious relic of a pre-scientific age, Dumas was richly endowed, but

he had the equally valuable gift of telling a story. This is only to say that he was first and last a dramatist, and indeed his dramas are (as he himself considered) his best, certainly his most proper and distinctive work. Clever as he was in filling out, interweaving, and elaborating to any extent, we should not go for the best examples of his constructive skill to the long romances spun out for a special purpose, but rather to his plays and certain of his shorter novels. An amiable horticulturist, his jealous rival, a gruff gaoler, his charming daughter, and William of Orange,—these are the figures of one of the prettiest and most self-complete stories possible. Compare it with another delightful flower-story,—admirable too and full of poetry, philosophy, and botany—but compare them in the matter of workmanship, and *LA TULIPE NOIRE* will appear far superior to *PICCIOLA*. A similar conclusion might be drawn from a comparison on this point between *LE CHEVALIER DE MAISON ROUGE* and *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*. It is impossible indeed to emphasise too much the richness of Dumas's dramatic faculty as explaining the success with which he used (*tout en dehors* again) all the conventional effects of surprise, suspense, and contrast. And as the qualities of the good playwright also make the good story-teller, it follows that Dumas was (as Abraham Hayward said) "the best possible story-teller in print," the one who could from the least make the most. We like him none the worse because he

was only a story-teller,—an entertainer pure and simple, but a God-given entertainer as befitted his family motto *Deus dedit, Deus dabit*, spontaneous and unforced, always working and never labouring. "One of the forces of Nature," that happy phrase of Michelet, itself inexplicable, explains everything about Dumas,—his fertility, his inequality, his wastefulness. For the order of Nature (as a philosopher has remarked) though beneficent is not optimistic. And this man was like a tree bearing fruit abundantly in its kind, from which all men pluck at their will, keeping the choice and flinging away that which is over-ripe or under-ripe, but sometimes abusing what they have flung away and forgetting how good was what they kept.

Such was Alexandre Dumas. Take from him the elements, extravagant or grotesque as they may strike us, common to the ecstatic age into which he came; take from him that kind of abnormal fascination under which a serious man-of-letters could arouse his wife in the dead of night to tell her that the prisoner had escaped from the *Château d'If*; take from him whatever attraction may accrue from a weariness of other writers and other aims,—take all this away as temporary and accidental, and there still remain imperishable qualities which belong not to the province of criticism or even of praise, but to that of admiration and perhaps reverence.

ARTHUR F. DAVIDSON.

GIFFORD'S GRAVE.¹

(A STORY OF SIR GEORGE NAPIER.)

MANY a hero, born and bred
 By Irish waters, has worn the red,
 Many a soldier wise and good ;
 But never was bred a nobler brood
 Than grew in times of a troubled state
 Amid the anguish of 'Ninety-eight,
 And wore the blazon *Without a stain*—
 The eagle-featured Napier strain.

Wide as the world they spread their praise,
 Heroes three in heroic days ;
 Three names written in living gold ;—
 This is a deed of the second told.

To Torres Vedras in evil hour
 Massena led Napoleon's power,
 Baffled and beaten, back again
 Turned the invading host to Spain,
 And through the lands that their rapine wronged,
 Fierce pursuers, the British thronged :
 Fierce pursuers ; yet on the trail
 Of such a quarry might hunters quail ;
 The rearguard, veterans led by Ney,
 At Cazal Nova were held to bay.

Napier had seen a brother borne
 Back for dead from the field that morn,
 Brother dearer than life or limb,
 Not than the friend who fought by him :
 For at his side was Gifford,—one
 Brave as a Napier, that had done
 Things surpassing belief that day,
 Leading his men in the bitter fray
 Over hillock and wall and trench :
Kill that officer ! stormed the French.

¹ See LIFE OF GENERAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, i., 162, and EARLY MILITARY LIFE OF SIR GEORGE NAPIER, p. 156. George Napier was at this time a captain in the 52nd, and his brother William a captain in the 43rd, the two regiments forming with the 95th Crawford's famous Light Division. Both brothers were wounded in this engagement.

Gifford's Grave.

The fight had joined with the rising sun ;
 By noon the powder was almost done.
 Napier was bidding his men retire
 To come again with a fiercer fire,
 And called to Gifford, who, farther still,
 Stood to the front on the vine-clad hill.
 Gifford turned ; and from ambush close
 Unseen behind him Frenchmen rose.
 Help there was none ; a crash, a flare,
 A cry ; and Gifford was lying there.
 And out of the bushes, where they crept
 Hidden, four of the enemy leapt,
 Leapt, and swift on the spoil they ran
 Bending to strip the fallen man.

Napier looked : they were four to one,
 His friend lay dead, and the harm was done ;
 But while his body held living breath
 That friend should suffer no shame in death.
 He asked no aid, and he spoke no word,
 But charged the foe with his single sword ;
 He scared the vultures, and steel met steel,
 And, one to many, he made them reel.
 Two of his men had seen, and back
 Followed swift on their captain's track.
 Vengeance was done ; they raised their dead,
 Tenderly raised the shattered head.
 Napier could hear the bullets fly,
 But he lifted the body fair and high,
 And bore the dead, death screaming round,
 To where his company held their ground.

Rough they were from the battle-time,
 Their mouths were black with the cartridge-grime,
 Bloody and black their hands ; each eye
 Lit with the light that sees men die ;
 Rough-looking, rough-worded ; and yet they knew
 To give to a hero's heart its due.
 For they gathered and swore no kite should tear
 The man they honoured, but even there
 He should have burial fit and fair.

For him they did what of him alone
 In history's golden page is shown.
 There they paused, with the storm of war
 Raging about them near and far ;
 There, in the front where he fought so well,
 There they buried him where he fell.

Hard was the sod ; red bayonet blades
Were fitted ill for the work of spades ;
Shallow the trench was dug ; but deep,
Deep in their hearts his name they keep.
No prayer was said, and no bell rang,
And nothing there but the bullets sang.
But as they levelled the latest sod
Three cheers commended his soul to God.
Silently then they formed, nor stirred
Till they fired a volley at Napier's word ;
A man would have thought they were on parade
Who saw not the gaps their volley made.

The brave to the brave had done their rite,
And Napier led them again to the fight ;
The bayonets, doughty with soil and dust,
Drank deep and deeper at every thrust.
Forward they surged ; they fought to kill,
Cleared the copses and swept the hill ;
Dearly by nightfall their debt was paid,
When far in the front their camp was made ;
And in the wake of that fiery wave
Lone in its glory lay Gifford's Grave.

S. G.

THE COLLEGE AT KHARTOUM,—AND AFTER.

THE Arabs say, "When Allah made the Soudan he laughed." It was the laugh of derision that said there should be no peace, no plenty, no freedom from terror in that most miserable of all lands. This truth has proved itself through years of savagery, but now the English have come back it will be true no longer.

So soon as General Kitchener had finished his campaign against the Dervishes, he set himself to the far more difficult task of re-making (for it is nothing less) the Egyptian Soudan. The two weapons for its accomplishment are education and the railway. The last is well begun, and it can only be a question of time before it stretches its civilising length right down Africa. Of education in the Soudan there is as yet none, but the College at Khartoum will begin that work. This project of the Sirdar's is one that reaches the heart of England, for, apart from the civilisation it inaugurates, it will stand as a great and fitting tribute to the memory of Gordon.

But it is well to consider what its results are likely to be, and whether it will work in exactly the way most people expect; and in order to do this it is necessary to go back a little into the history of the Soudan before the arrival of the Mahdi. Since the Arab conquest of Egypt and the establishment of the Mameluke dynasty at Cairo, the people of the Egyptian Soudan have been Mahommedans. The faith of Islam is one that by its very simplicity takes hold of the imaginations of savages, and

the Soudanese have always been more fanatical Mahommedans than those in Egypt, for the obvious reason that they were entirely removed from external influences. Though practically shut off from Upper Egypt and left very much to its own devices, the Soudan was nominally under the control of the Khedive, and according as he was weak or strong his grasp of the country was relaxed or tightened. The upholders of his authority were the Governor-Generals who ruled the province from Khartoum. Gordon was the last representative of a civilised power, when in 1886 the whole of the Soudan up to Wady Halfa was abandoned to the rule of the Mahdi.

To the general reader the Mahdi now means Mahommed Ahmad of Dongola. But in all Mussulman countries there have been many Mahdis; Mahommed Ahmad was only more fortunate, and therefore more prominent than his fellows. In the latter years of the Khedive Ismail's reign a Mahdi appeared who was promptly suppressed, and if similar measures had been taken when Mahommed Ahmad first called upon his followers to raise the standard of Allah among the Infidels, many things would have been different; Gordon's life would not have been thrown away, and also, probably, the conquest and civilising of the Soudan would have been deferred for an indefinite time, and the black ways of the slave-hunters have remained unchecked.

The question of slave-trading has been, and still is to a certain extent, the crucial factor in the affairs of the Soudan. It has long been the one

great traffic of central Africa, the principal export and means of livelihood of the powerful African chiefs. Natural causes, as well as the avarice of the chiefs, fight for the slave-trade and against all attempts to uproot it. In their raids into the savage interior for ivory the Arabs, finding that human transport was the only means available, impressed the natives to carry their booty, and then, discovering that what is grimly known as black ivory was more valuable, they gradually confined themselves to slave-raiding; and thus grew up the most terrible curse of the Soudan. The horror and desolation spread by this fearful trade will probably never be even guessed. Gordon, who knew more about it than any other Englishman, said in one of his letters: "I am a fool, I dare say, but I cannot see the sufferings of these people without tears in my eyes." When Sir Samuel Baker was Governor-General of the Equatorial Provinces he dealt some blows at the trade, but finding the evil so deeply rooted, he in despair gave up any attempt to radically alter things.

Gordon went out with a freer hand than his predecessor, and indeed, if the freedom had not been granted him, he would have made it. He was determined to put down slave-raiding at all risks, and the Khedive was entirely with him. Ismail had in truth good reason to fear for his authority. A small Egyptian army, which he had sent into the Bahr-el-Ghazal to overthrow the great slave-chief Zobeir Rahamah, had been absolutely annihilated, and Zobeir had become in fact, if not in name, the real ruler of the Soudan south of Khartoum. As their power increased, the chiefs waxed rebellious and refused to pay their tributes to the Khedival treasury. In supporting Gordon therefore Ismail saw that,

while earning the approval of Europe by suppressing the un-Christian traffic, he would be at the same time removing a menace to his own authority.

It is difficult to judge impartially of what Gordon's labours in the Soudan actually achieved. But it is beginning to be seen now that, herculean as his efforts were, and greatly as he alleviated the misery of the poor natives, he dealt his blows at the effect and not at the cause of the traffic. Gordon suppressed, but did not uproot the slave-trade; he kept the evil under with a strong hand, but when that hand was removed the evil sprang to life again. The root of the matter lay in the fact that slave-porterage was the only available means of transmitting ivory and other valuables from the interior to the Nile; and as long as that was so, no considerations of humanity would prevent the Arab chiefs from using it. The only effectual and enduring way to check this was by making roads and railways, and thus, while removing the necessity for human porterage, providing the means of capturing and punishing those who still tried to adhere to the old and evil order of things. If Gordon's rule could have lasted he would have made the slave-trade impossible by his own exertions without the aid of roads and external power. As he said, "Not a man could lift his hand without my leave throughout the whole extent of the Soudan."

But there was no other Gordon to follow him, and in the hour of Egypt's weakness and of England's indecision came the Mahdi. He gave his support to the disheartened slave-dealers and thus drew them to his standard; and the fanaticism which is so quick to spread in any savage country brought the rest of the powerful and discontented tribes to his camp.

Among the ignorant Egyptian

populace it was greatly feared that the triumphant Dervishes would overrun Upper Egypt. That it was the Mahdi's own ambition at one time is clear; a song called *To Cairo* was freely sung in his camp by his too-confident warriors. The English command to evacuate the Soudan was received with the utmost consternation and protest in Cairo. Even the Khedive Tewfik remonstrated as strongly as he dared with the British Government, believing, as he did, that the abandonment of the Soudan was a most dangerous thing for Egypt. But Tewfik had not the money for a campaign against the Dervishes on his own account, and though England had she would not use it for that purpose. How shortsighted her policy was, the history of the last fourteen years has most amply proved. The whole effect of Gordon's work in the Soudan, and of his sublime self-sacrifice, was nullified by the hurried evacuation of that country. His vigorous efforts to destroy the slave-trade were snapped off short and rendered entirely useless,—and worse than useless, for the flood broke out again with redoubled violence when that dauntless figure no longer barred the way. The policy of evacuation was intended to be permanent, but Gordon's desertion and death at Khartoum prevented that. It was as sure as the rising of the sun that some day, whether soon or late, England was bound to retrieve that disgrace, and put an end to the Dervish triumph.

And now that has been done. The day of the Sirdar's entry into Omdurman began a new era for the Soudan; the stately requiem before the ruins of Gordon's palace was the burial of past mistakes. That the future is full of difficulties is obvious, but the British Government have at last settled their policy with regard to the Soudan, and

given that, they have the strength to carry it out.

The Sirdar's scheme for the civilisation of the country is a comprehensive one, and, like all he has to do with, thoroughly practical. So simple a scheme, as this of the Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum, hardly, at first sight, seems to hold the seeds of so great an undertaking as the regeneration of the Soudan and its people. But in the very simplicity of the idea lies its best earnest of success. The strange and seemingly rough ways of Western methods must be smoothed and made plain if they are to take any permanent and acceptable hold of Eastern minds.

Almost the first question to be considered is whether the education given is to be combined with any attempt to introduce the Christian religion into the Soudan. Not a small portion of the British public would look upon any other idea with horror. Clear the way with the Maxim and then follow with the Bible: our wars, they think, are for the purpose of making the path of the missionary easy; and how wrong or incongruous, they would add, that any memorial to Gordon should not be of a professedly religious character. Now all who have studied Gordon's life must reverently recognise how great a thing his religion was to him, and how truly he followed its teaching. But if we ask whether he wrenched away their faith from the savages he went among and forcibly substituted his own, the answer must be that most assuredly he did not. Do these narrow-minded Christians remember that Gordon himself built a mosque for the Mussulmans he ruled; and that in the mosque at Mecca, where his name is written on the walls, he is yearly prayed for by the followers of the Prophet?

And there is another and more serious side to this question. It is

not to be expected that any attempt to tamper with their faith would be taken calmly by the Arabs, who are most devout Mahomedans. At the best it would successfully alienate these races from the English who are trying to teach them, and thus prevent a growing sympathy which would be the best safeguard for future peace. At the worst it would mean a repetition of our past troubles. Let the people once be disturbed by any suspicion of proselytising, and sooner or later another Mahdi will arise, and the quick flame of fanaticism leap once more from end to end of the Soudan. It may be said that this is impossible, that Mahdism was crushed out at Omdurman, that, in fact, there are no Dervishes left; but these people are not as we are, fanaticism is part of their daily life, and the possibility of Mahdism can never die. Of course such a rising could have no ultimate chance of success, but the Arabs can fight a lost battle, as they showed on the Atbara and at Omdurman, as fiercely as if they had all the chances of victory on their side.

The history of the world shows that a religion flourishes most vigorously under persecution, while in prosperity it is apt to fade into a form. So will it be in the Soudan. If the English try to wrest their faith from them by force, the Soudanese will but the more fiercely cling to it; but a purely secular education will, without disturbing their religion, rob it of its fanaticism, and thus of its danger. Lord Kitchener's own words put this point on its noblest and truest basis: "Any attempt to raise the moral and intellectual tone of the people must be doing God's service, and if we can teach the inhabitants of the Soudan to be reasoning, thinking people, we shall be giving them the foundations of what I believe is our religion."

One thing is certain, the natives of all savage countries, however ignorant and wild, are not slow to recognise the value of a just Government; and in the dark recesses of the Soudan and Equatorial Africa those who pursue the work of civilising will find that the first seeds were sown and the path made clear by Charles Gordon. If the government they bring to the black people is Gordon's government of pure justice tempered with patience and understanding, it will not be rejected by the people who still cry out for his return: "If we only had a Governor like Gordon Pasha," they say, "then the country would indeed be contented." But at the best it can be no easy thing to manage the conflicting prejudices of all the peoples of the Soudan. Gordon's own words must have a weight beyond those of all others:

I feel sure that a series of bad governments have ruined the people. Three generations of good government would scarcely regenerate them. Their secretiveness is the result of the fear that if they give, it may chance that they may want. Their indolence is the result of experience that if they do well, or if they do badly, the result will be *nil* to them, therefore why should they exert themselves? Their cowardice is the result of the fear of responsibility. They are fallen on so heavily if anything goes wrong. Their deceit is the result of fear and want of moral courage, as they have no independence in their characters.

These are all faults very difficult to deal with, but it should be remembered that they are bred in the natives by the cruelty and avarice of a long series of bad governors. By the exercise of endless patience and judgment these faults can be civilised away, and self-respect and courage put in their place. It has been done by Englishmen before, as the Egyptian Fellaheen have conclusively proved at Firket, at Dongola, on the Atbara, at Omdurman; it can be done again.

The Soudanese are naturally more teachable than the Fellaheen. They are quicker, more imitative, more alert. They adapt themselves to changed conditions more easily than the majority of uncivilised people; and, strongest point of all, they soon grow to like and admire the white man. The devotion with which the Soudanese battalions followed their white officers in this recent campaign could not be surpassed. "When it was over," writes Mr. Stevens of the battle on the Atbara, "their officers were ready to cry with joy and pride. And the blacks, every one of whom would beamingly charge the bottomless pit after his Bey, were just as joyous and proud of their officers." The remnant of the Dervish tribes are more difficult to deal with; but even before the close of the Dongola expedition it was evident that the Jaalin tribe, goaded to rebellion by the Khalifa's tyranny, were only waiting the first opportunity to come over to the English. The Baggara Arab is the fiercest, cruellest, and most implacable of all the Mahdi's followers. But his courage is something superb, his endurance and devotion touch the heroic, and under a wiser rule than heretofore such strong material should not be wasted. If his allegiance can be secured he will fight as splendidly for the British as he fought for the Mahdi.

It is the unborn generations of the Soudan that the Gordon College will teach and benefit; it is for the sons that it will be built, not for the fathers. The only teaching that can be given to the adult Soudanese is military, not educational,—speaking, of course, in the restricted sense of the word, for military training is an education in itself to untaught blacks.

If the education follows the lines at present laid down by the Sirdar, the natives will truly be happier and wealthier and wiser for it. With a

simple people, whose living must come from the land they till, all good education must tend to make them better husbandmen, not superficially learned, office-seeking drones. India is a warning of the effects of over-educating the natives. Let them keep their own virtues, which in the best of them are simple and manly enough, and not try to make brains where muscle is the most useful.

In this College the departments of Irrigation and Forestry are of the utmost importance, not only to the Soudanese themselves but to the whole of Egypt; for the problem of the adequacy of the Nile to the increasing demands upon it is one that yearly grows more pressing. That the Nile has shrunk considerably since the days of the Pharaohs is proved by the old high-water marks, while some of the great rivers which used to feed the Father of Egypt have sunk deep underground. As the Soudan is opened and cultivated, the water taken from the Nile for purposes of irrigation will increase each year; the railway which is to be made will devour all the forests in its path, and it is the forests alone that safeguard the feeders of the Nile. From Abyssinia, Darfur, and the Bahr-el-Ghazal come the rivers that swell the Nile, and it is the forests on their banks that make and feed these rivers. The progress of civilisation will inevitably clear away most of these wooded places, for in a tropical country almost the first weapon of civilisation is the axe; and in Abyssinia the natives are themselves gradually using up the water-preserving forests.

The end will not be yet, but if this goes on the result is clear to see, and it is a terrible one. Egypt depends on the Nile; the gradually lessening streams in the highlands of Abyssinia may not seem to matter in cosmopolitan

Cairo, but Cairo itself lives as much by the Nile as the meanest village huddled on its banks hundreds of miles south of the great city. That the re-conquest of the Soudan, British money and brains and pluck, the richness of the undeveloped provinces south of Khartoum, the lives and happiness of the natives, should all be thrown away because of the helpless want of water is not to be thought of; and the remedy is a very simple one. By establishing the Forest Conservancy, by preserving the existing forests and planting new ones to store and gather the tropic rains, the streams that feed the Nile will be increased in volume, the empty beds filled with water again, and the great river be equal to the increasing demands upon it which prosperity will bring.

There is another, and at the present moment a more imminent danger which threatens the Nile. It is essential to Egypt's welfare, to Egypt's very existence, that the sources of the Nile should not fall into the hands of any foreign Power. Egypt and Great Britain must hold and control the entire area of the Egyptian Soudan, must hold and control, that is to say, all the provinces that have ever owned the rule of Egypt. The country can never be successfully administered under a policy of graceful concessions. It must be the whole or nothing. Those who control the sources of the Nile control Egypt. Were its waters cut off or diverted from their proper course, Egypt, down to Cairo, would be turned back to the desert where no man can live. The Nile is the keynote of Egypt, and to

allow it to be tampered with by other nations is more than dangerous; it is fatal.

That the Soudan south of Khartoum is well worth protecting and cultivating is fully known. Sir Samuel Baker spoke of it as one of the world's most productive granaries; two crops of corn can be raised in a year, and it is rich in cotton, tobacco, coffee, and maize. The regions round Khartoum are called the Garden of the Soudan, and not a few nations would be glad to relieve us of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Thus in time even the miserable and stricken Soudan will pay its way, and cease to swallow English gold like a morass giving no return.

However, there is much work to be done before this result can be reached. Fourteen years of licence and barbarism cannot be civilised away in a day, and it will be years before the effect of Gordon's College at Khartoum can be felt by the great mass of the people. But even now, before the making of the new Soudan has begun, England has won back her national self-respect, and in so doing has set her hand to a plough from which she may not turn back. She is irretrievably committed to the work, and it is this that makes the future of the Gordon College so sure; for it is not merely an educational system, it is to be the very life-blood of the new Soudan, and a mighty weapon in the hands of the English against all the old wrongs and oppressions. It is this that Lord Kitchener means it to be, and in this larger sphere of usefulness lies the way to make this College a lasting and increasing good.

THE ARMY-DOCTOR.

THE one fact above all others which the Dreyfus case has, during its many phases in the past few years, brought to light is that in the French War-Office expediency is supreme. Honour exists there only in name, and equity is an unknown thing. In this country we have naturally grasped the opportunity of thanking God that we are not as other men are, and chances of self-complacency are too rare to be lost. It has occurred to few to inquire whether there is any justification for the easy confidence which has been placed in our own military righteousness. Our War-Office it is true does not commit the clumsy blunder of forgery, and the Government razor is reserved for shaving only. We do not have recourse to the expression on the honour of a soldier when we fail to produce evidence in support of an allegation, because we believe, or feign to believe, that honour is too great a thing to be split up into compartments, and because we have not the nice sense of discrimination which characterises our neighbours. But, for all that, expediency dominates all else at the English War-Office every whit as much as it does at the French War-Office.

The doctor in the Army has, after many years of moderately successful agitation, and after a few months of an absolutely successful strike, become a real live officer. He is no longer after some twenty years' service a Something-Colonel or a Colonel-Something; he is a Colonel pure and simple. The Commander-in-Chief himself would hesitate to affirm that this concession of rank has been

granted the Army-doctor as a matter of equity. The reverse indeed is the case. The history of the Army Medical Department is on all fours with the history of all other Service departments, except the clerical branch. The chaplains have never agitated, and though they have probably refrained from doing so from a proper sense of decorum, such action would have benefited them nothing. It is of no official moment whether the chaplain is good or bad, and, more still, the matter is one of opinion. A good or bad Army-doctor, or Supply-officer, is a matter of fact. The departments have induced legislation on their behalf in the simplest fashion. They have done their work badly, or omitted to do it at all. Tradition is the most stubborn foe which the present race of War-Office politicians have had to fight. The combatant branch of the Service, (though still, except in cases so rare as not to merit attention, without emoluments, and shorn of its ancient honours) and the combatant branch alone attracts the young man of military ardour. But, Dr. Johnson notwithstanding, a man must live, and feeling that the axiom was unimpeachable the youth of England came in and the departments were served. "My poverty and not my will consents," whined the boy, who had visions of greater things as he submitted himself to the non-combatant yoke. "I pay thy poverty and not thy will," said the War-Office, and the result of work undertaken in this spirit can be readily imagined.

Modern inventions and increase of empire enhanced in a few years the value of the Supply and of Departmental officers to an extent for which the authorities were utterly unprepared. The Army clock refused to go fast enough, and the War-Office commenced a long system of tinkering at the works without perceiving that it was the mainspring that was at fault. The Ordnance, Commissariat, and Transport branches they succeeded in getting into something like shape by means of a system of bribes, which were grossly unfair from the standpoint of equity, to the combatant officer. Their action was as illogical as it was unjust. The laws of supply and demand are simple enough in themselves, but they do not bear the introduction of extraneous matter in their administration. "I can officer the regiments to-morrow for nothing," Lord Wolseley is reported on good authority to have said. If this be so, a second-lieutenant in a Line battalion receives 5s. 3d. a day on the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire. The payment of this sum commits the War-Office at least to a policy of equity. That being so, arguments on the subject of the market-value of a chattel or an individual fall to the ground. The Regimental officer had admittedly done his work satisfactorily, but there were a great many of him always forthcoming, so there was no necessity for him to come under review. The misdeeds of the Departmental officer cried aloud, and as a simple commercial transaction the War-Office proceeded to pay a higher price for a better article. The doctors observed the development of this state of affairs, and profited by the lesson that was taught. A very large number of them invariably come from Ireland, and the name and story of Boycott were familiar to them. They

combined, and refused to come in. Little wars increased in frequency, and the War-Office became seriously alarmed. In vain they offered to widen the gold stripe on the doctors' trousers, and to reduce to such infinitesimal proportions as would escape the observation of a sentry the thin black line on their forage-caps, which alone proclaimed that they were not Staff-officers. Their cry was *rank, rank, and nothing but rank*. Matters came to a crisis when at a certain examination there were less candidates than vacancies. Then the War-Office capitulated, and a few months of action brought about the result which years of petitioning had failed to accomplish. The hateful title of surgeon has disappeared, and they are henceforth captains, majors, colonels.

Surely it is a curious history, and one of which there is absolutely only one explanation. The men who wish to obliterate all allusion to their profession are ashamed of it. This state of affairs is hard to be understood of the people, and the simple layman need not be mocked for holding that the relief of suffering and the saving of life rank high in the list of human deeds. I do not say that this cry for the elimination of all allusion to their profession in their official title was universal. It was not so. Many excellent men, who were proud of being soldiers, but who were proud of being doctors as well, were much in favour of retaining a designation which marked them as both. But the contented man seldom agitates one way or another. Another considerable section of the Department were at the end of their service. They knew that the War-Office wheel turns slowly, and, thinking that the matter would not affect them one way or another, they were indifferent. Thus

the promoters of the new movement met with no organised opposition from within, and the authorities at the Horseguards were prevailed upon to issue their famous warrant of surrender.

There is a miserable fallacy that the doctor was what is called in ordinary parlance "looked down upon" in the Service. The most cynical combatant officer would admit that the calling of the doctor (and the chaplain) was higher than his own, and, if they could be persuaded to believe it, it is only when the doctor neglects, or by his actions and demeanour belittles, that calling that he falls in military esteem. Surely this extraordinary greed for rank is a poor thing. We excuse it in women, for, either by reason of lack of opportunity or want of ability, their sphere of action is limited; and it is invariably the case that the woman who fails to do something wants to be somebody. But for man there is no such excuse. However, the desire to be labelled, and, as the Army-doctor thinks, to be honourably labelled, is increasing.

The peculiarity is that the War-Office apparently fails to perceive the inevitable result of giving way to a desire on the part of a body of their servants to conceal what they are, and to be known as what they are not. It may be argued, and of course officially it is so argued, that such a description does not represent the state of affairs truthfully. Everyone, however, acquainted with military social life knows better. Take a simple instance. Let a sympathetic lady ask a Medical captain (in the presence of others) how that poor man is who was injured at the Sports yesterday, and see if he looks pleased, or is inclined to be talkative. When the same lady asks the Line captain if this morning's parade was not an

unusual one, she had perhaps better make up her mind to be bored.

Military rank was, until quite recent times, the right and the distinguishing mark of the combatant Regimental officer. Indeed it was more; it was part of his pay. Young men of education since Marlborough's time have been content to take commissions in regiments for a wage which a respectable artisan would scorn, to submit themselves to a discipline which has no counterpart outside the Services, to be hunted without warning from one corner of the globe to another, and to undergo risks which an Insurance Company very practically regards as extreme. Their reward has been the honour of their profession and the recognition thereof in military rank. Not unnaturally Society began to extend a good deal of hospitality to the soldier, and to treat him with a kindly consideration which he could not fail to find pleasant. It was not on account of his rank, but on account of the conditions and circumstances under which that rank was conferred that these little courtesies were extended to him. Then in the midst of an age of labels and advertisement the Volunteer movement began; a grand practical illustration of English character, but one from which a section of its members, who are not careful to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, have already detracted sympathy. It soon became evident that it was the rank of an officer, and not a modified form of his duties, which attracted a large number of individuals into this unpaid Army. The communities in which these gentlemen live are for the most part busy, and have neither the time nor the inclination to analyse. So it soon came about that the opulent merchant, who sat at home at ease, who neglected or performed his self-imposed military

duties as he felt disposed, who did not rudely expose his constitution to the biting blasts of Wimbledon Common, and who retained the unalienable right of the British civilian to say *sha'n't* under all circumstances, dined comfortably in his own castle and was received by his friends in the evening as the Colonel. Sometimes he carried the craze for rank into his daily life to an extent which became absolutely exasperating, as the following story will illustrate.

A man suffering much from toothache once went to a firm of dentists, all three partners of which were ardent volunteers. "Is Mr. Osgood at home?" he asked. The footman who opened the door to him had also military tendencies: "Captain Osgood," he replied, "is at Bisley for the Cup competition." "Oh, is Mr. Hapworth in?" "Major Hapworth, sir, is undergoing a course of instruction at Aldershot." "Ah, can Mr. Dixon attend to me then?" "Colonel Dixon is on battalion-parade and cannot possibly be disturbed." The poor man was in great pain; he spoke wildly: "Look here, have you an Admiral on the premises who can take my tooth out?"

We have now arrived officially at this state of things in the case of the Army-doctor. The operator who removes the British soldier's tooth has not yet been advanced to the rank of admiral, but he is already a colonel, and doubtless he thinks that there are possibilities in the future.

If the doctor is likely to be more useful to the Army now that he is called Major or Colonel than he was when he was called Surgeon-Major and Surgeon-Colonel, the privileges of the combatant Regimental officer would suffer in a good cause. The complaint in the Service is already that the medical man is more of the officer than the doctor; is he

likely to attend more to his profession now that all allusion to it is obliterated in his title? As a matter of fact it is most unjust to blame the individual military doctor, as he is freely blamed, for carelessness and incompetence. True the Army does not attract the best men from the hospitals, because its prizes cannot compete with those which civil practice offers to the man of energy, ability, and research. In fact the conditions of the Service themselves put a premium on stagnation. It is almost impossible to expect any scientific man to put forth his best work on a regular salary. In every other branch of life one does not hesitate to appeal to a man's interest in preference to his sense of duty. Why should an Army-doctor be placed upon an impossible plane, and execrated when he slips off it? There is no stimulus for industry in the life of the Army-doctor, and the War-Office know perfectly well that they are engaging men who do not wish their industry to be stimulated. Commercially nine out of ten earn their money; that is to say, a similar amount of time and attention to that which they expend in the Army would at least gain them a similar income in private practice. A pennyworth may not be a great deal, but it is as much as a man, even if he be a high military official, has a right to expect for a penny.

Discipline goes hand in hand with rank, and the ordinary discipline of the combatant officer is not always suitable in a branch where individual opinion must reasonably count for much. Yet such is the training of the Army-doctor that the senior grows to resent any divergence of view on the part of the junior, and a question which is often purely a medical one is distorted by the introduction of a false sense of discipline. Once upon a time in Burmah an officer's pony

tumbled over, and the officer injured his arm. He was attended by a doctor who prescribed. That doctor went on leave in the evening, and another doctor attended next day. The second doctor, a senior man, altered the course of treatment, and told his patient that he should not be back for a few days. On the following morning a third doctor came in, and was vastly surprised to find the injured officer lifting heavy weights at much personal inconvenience. The third doctor was a cheery young fellow and a friend of the patient; he tersely asked him if he was mad or drunk. The officer explained that he was obeying the orders of the surgeon-major who had attended him on the previous day. The cheery doctor at once looked grave and after a pause commenced to chat on social matters. But it was too late. "Is this treatment right or wrong?" said the officer. "I'm not going to countermand Jones's orders," said the young man. "He'll be back in a couple of days, and you can talk to him." "Yes, but I'm not going to make a fool of myself for a couple of days, old chap, for the sake of preventing your boss from jumping on you, you know." Then the officer went on to point out, in vigorous Saxon, that the weight-lifting operation was a particularly painful one. Finally he apologised for being compelled to become official, but he felt bound to desire a direct expression of opinion. The young doctor was equal to the occasion: "I endorse Surgeon-Major Jones's treatment," he said coolly.

The incident is not unique, but merely illustrates a state of affairs that is known to exist. It is but fair to admit that the consequences of divergence of opinion are sometimes more serious to the patient than those of endorsement. Some years ago in India I was a member

of a European District Court-Martial which was trying a native soldier on the charge of malingering. The man had received a bullet wound in the Soudan, and for two years, on the recommendation of the Station-doctor, had been excused the heavier portions of his military work. Then the doctor left for Burmah and his successor at once certified the man to be fit for duty. The colonel of the regiment thereupon had that sepy brought to justice. The prisoner very naturally called in his defence the doctor who had attended him for two years. That doctor being hundreds of miles away, the application was referred to headquarters. Three months elapsed and at last a lengthy document arrived from Simla. It was too clever for the simple court-martial officer to follow, but it concluded with what seemed to our limited capacities the inconsequent ruling that the Burmah doctor's attendance was unnecessary. The chief witness for the prosecution was the new doctor, and he said simply that he had examined the man on arrival and found him suffering no pain. Whereupon the prisoner put the very natural question, "How do you know that I was suffering no pain?" It was an awkward retort, but the new doctor had plenty of pluck. I do not know what he meant to say, or if his reply, as delivered, is a sound medical axiom, but he answered: "Pain is accompanied by redness and increased suffusion of the joint; these symptoms I found to be absent." A flippant young officer on that court had a pin in his hand, and he ran it into the knee of his next neighbour as the doctor spoke. The wounded officer made an irrelevant exclamation and was very properly reproved by the President. Nor could he be persuaded, when we at once inspected his knee (we had just

reached the luncheon interval) and pointed out to him that it was an entire mistake on his part to suppose that he had suffered any pain. The prisoner received a severe sentence,—two years' imprisonment and dismissal from the Service—and thus it would have been far better for him had the new doctor sunk his independence.

A great deal is heard about the responsibility of the Army-doctor. The young doctor on joining, however, is rapidly reminded that responsibility must only be undertaken as a last resource, and that the important thing is to learn and comply with the regulations, regardless of result. It is better to illustrate. A junior officer serving on the Staff, while walking to the office with his Chief, slipped and fell just outside the Cambridge Hospital at Aldershot, and injured his knee. His Chief, with the assistance of an orderly, got him inside the hospital and met the Surgeon-General in command of the District as he entered the door. As the said Chief occupied a high official position the Surgeon-General accompanied the party into the waiting-room and chatted suitably upon general subjects. But he had no intention of doing any doctor's work. He sent an order, and received a reply that a medical officer would shortly be forthcoming. In vain the senior Staff-officer hinted that it would be a kindness if the great man himself would condescend to place his hand on the spot. Half-an-hour or so elapsed, and finally a young doctor appeared and prescribed. The injured officer was fortunate, for he had fallen into extremely good hands. He spent some weeks on the sick-list, it is true, but was much pleased when his adviser told him that (it was the fourth or fifth time that the knee had given way) he hoped to effect a permanent cure. I

speak with all the becoming diffidence of a layman upon a technical point, but I understand that the doctor recommended that the cartilage should be wired, though he was careful to say that a stiff knee might result from the operation. The officer was ready to risk the consequences, but directly higher authority learned the proposal, that young doctor received a severe reprimand. Were the attempt unsuccessful, questions of pension would be involved, for the patient would naturally have to be invalided out of the Service. Supreme medical authority and supreme administrative authority were careless as to whether an officer had a good knee, but they were not prepared to take the consequences of his having a bad one. There is no trace of the principles of the Employers' Liability Act in the Queen's Regulations. The poor young doctor pleaded that he had only recommended what he believed to be best, and was sternly bidden to get out of that habit. He is trying to do so, I hear, but he has a conscience which is not under proper military control.

The responsibility of the doctor with the officer sometimes pales in importance when compared to that of the officer with the doctor. I again lapse into anecdote. Some years ago I was in camp, with about a hundred men, somewhere in the North West Provinces. The doctor detailed for duty with us asked for forty-eight hours' leave. I do not believe I had any authority to give leave, but I felt I could spare him, and a man who cannot put equity before regulation in the jungle cannot do so anywhere. Having consented, however, I felt inclined to shirk my responsibilities as his substitute. As he was going I asked him what I was to do in case of emergency. "Come to the Hospital-tent now and I'll tell you,"

he replied. He was an Irishman, and I will ask the reader kindly to supply the necessary *bedads*, *begorras* and *at-all-at-alls*, without which no Irish story in print is artistic, together with the proper pronunciation. "Here are two bottles now. If a man comes to you and says, 'Oh I fale any'ow in the head—everythin's buzzin and I'm not drunk,'—give him some of this bottle." "Yes,—how much?" "Oh, as much as you like; it won't hurt him. And if he says he's all crumpled up in his belly and turns sick at the sight of a canteen-mug, give him some of this bottle." "Yes,—how much?" "Oh, be easy with it; I've not a pint left. And if he comes in and sits down and says nothing and don't give a dam for anything, get a *dhoolie* and send him into Benares." He departed, and I soon had a patient. He appeared to display symptom No. 1, but my courage failed me and I gave him treatment No. 3 and procured a *dhoolie*. No further catastrophe occurred, and the next evening the doctor returned. He brought with him some twelve couple of snipe which were useful in the mess-tent during three days and a stock of *shikar*-stories which lasted the ante-room a week.

Undoubtedly the possibility of seeing active service attracts a certain number of men at the hospitals into Government employ, and it is on Service that the doctor is seen to the greatest advantage. In the field he triumphs over the regulations and does grand work in spite of them. Like the Regimental officer he knows that a campaign is his only chance of distinction. The case is different in other military departments and on the Staff of the Army; there a man may win fame, honour, and preferment in the piping times of peace by adding elegance to a tunic-button, or by re-

ducing the circumference of a cooking-pot. But the doctor and the Line subaltern must learn to be shot at with equanimity, and do their work the while, if they wish to attract that most dangerous of all attentions, official notice. The complaint sometimes goes forth that, when the war is at an end (I should say when military operations have terminated) the proportion of rewards and decorations given to the doctors is largely in excess of those distributed among other branches of the Service. Undoubtedly such is the case, and were that proportion doubled no injustice would be done. It is one of our pleasantries to assume that the personal courage of the Englishman is greater than that of any foreigner. Be this as it may, a study of the military history of Continental nations leads one to the indisputable conclusion that the self-devotion of the British doctor on the field of action, putting aside all questions of skill, has no parallel in the armies of France, Germany, or Russia. One is not at pains to inquire why this should be so; it is sufficient to notice the fact. What the doctors do well under the trying conditions of active service, they could certainly do well in the easy surroundings of the hospital that abuts on the barrack-square. It is the regulations that let and hinder them. The fatal and futile struggle for uniformity, into which the War-Office for ever plunges with desperate courage, is nowhere more noticeable than in their medical arrangements. In vain the young doctor complains that he cannot fit the square man into the round hole; he only gets himself into trouble. Let him but know the Medical Regulations, and the works of Thomson, Quain, Richardson and others need never litter his bookshelves. Driven by stress of circumstances from a legitimate and

natural interest in his professional work, he takes refuge in the pleasures of social life, and tries to master the difficult art of killing time agreeably. Increase of pay might assist him much in this pastime, but that he knows is out of the question. So he asks for more feathers, more lace, more frogs, and more salutes, and these have one after another been conceded to him. Now he has asked for real rank; and he has got it. What he will do with it, is the question of the day; and what the War-Office will do with him, now that he has got it, is the question of the future. Medical work is increasing in the Service just as it is in civil life. It is an uncivil proceeding to give a child new toys and to reduce his playtime. Signs are not wanting that the latest concession has already begun to tell its own obvious tale. Certain proceedings, which were matters of daily routine formerly, have now been discovered to be either beneath, or out of keeping with the dignity of a captain or a major in her Majesty's Army. He is a dreamer who regards the present state of affairs as anything but a phase. Fortunately the whole history of military administrative experiments points to a return of the old order of things when matters have become

sufficiently unbearable. Second-lieutenants were abolished; in nine years' time they were reintroduced. Two lieutenant-colonels and an unlimited supply of majors per battalion was another departure. Then the value of Mr. Gilbert's adage was recognised: "When everyone is somebody then no one's anybody." Once more therefore the order was *As you were*. So there is still hope.

In the Guards the system of the Regimental doctor worked well and happily long after it was abolished throughout the rest of the Army. In the future professional men may be less susceptible to sentiment, at any rate in official matters, than they are at present. Money has now been the measure of value in civilised communities for many hundreds of years, and it is not improbable that the doctor of the future may refuse to accept the rank of archangel as part payment for his services. His remuneration will therefore have to be increased. Competition will ensue: the best men will come in; and possibly the Army will once more be served by those who regard doctoring as their profession and who are not unwilling to be known as doctors.

PHILIP C. W. TREVOR.

THE PRESS OF PARIS.

WHEN the inexperienced traveller reaches the capital of a strange country, he finds in its newspapers a short cut to a knowledge of its inhabitants. He has neither the time nor the talent to understand the unaccustomed manners and the novel methods of thought which, if he had an eye to see and an ear to hear, would force themselves upon him at every turn. But his ambition to understand is not limited by his incapacity. For very shame refusing to return home without a carefully docketed, well-assured account of his vague experiences, he precipitates himself upon the journals, confident that he will discover in their columns a perfect reflection of the truth which eludes his hasty vision. Should Paris be the end of his pilgrimage the multiplicity of opinion, revealed in the daily Press, might baffle anything less resolute than the zeal of the tourist. But the tourist is always sanguine enough to defy confusion, and after a long course of journals he is prepared to avouch that France is gay and sombre, Royalist and Republican, amiable and insolent, generous and prejudiced. In a week he has made so many discoveries that he reckes not of their contradiction, and he generally seeks his own fireside, brave in the certainty that he has learned in a week all that is to be learned of France.

Yet the Press of no capital is so misleading as the Press of Paris. Each journal, no doubt, has its own peculiarities, but without a wide experience and a balanced judgment it is impossible to make up from these varying features a physiognomy of the

country. None the less, if we leave out of account the more violent organs of party-feeling, which are rather pamphlets than journals, we may detect a common character of gaiety and carelessness which belongs to the popular journals of the Boulevards. Above all, when you pick up at your breakfast a French newspaper of the better sort, you must forget the vast sheets of your own country. Paris will give you no news that is not belated, and very little opinion. The wise man, however, easily dispenses with the hasty opinions of others, and the appetite for news, grossly overfed in London, soon dies if it be not pampered. What, then, do we get from the FIGARO and its colleagues? We get a vast deal of amusement. For those who are eager for fiction, there are instalments of two works, as different as possible in style and temper. At the foot of one page is found a masterpiece of the new school; at the foot of another M. Xavier de Montépin unfolds his interminably elaborate plots. The leading article (the article *en tête* as they call it) is generally signed by one of the greatest names in France. The article, to be sure, may be jejune enough, since grandeur is no guarantee of spirit or intelligence; but at any rate it is signed and notorious, and rarely (if ever) is it intimately related to the question of the hour. Thus, with luck, we may encounter the delicate wit of M. Anatole France, the refined verse of M. de Régnier, the cultured observation of M. Huysmans, and the somewhat boisterous humour of MM. Allais and Auriol. That is to say,

the French journals preserve a literary point of view, wholly lost in our larger machines contrived chiefly for the dissemination of news. Again, such comments as there are upon current events are brief, pointed, and not too serious. The holes and corners are filled with stories told in four lines, a Gallic joke, or a scene crystallised in a tiny dialogue. Thus as the citizen sits in his tavern he may fill his eyes with print and yet escape the boredom of argument or information. The news which Paris affords is set forth with a certain completeness, though short-hand reports of speeches and such-like trash are unknown. The Frenchman seldom makes speeches, and when he does he attracts small notice. But the French, like the Greeks, close their eyes to the outer world of Barbarians, and the news of that world reaches them slowly through an English channel. In brief, then, the respectable part of the French Press aims at gaiety rather than improvement, and would rather raise a laugh than instruct its readers.

But a newspaper cannot live on gaiety alone, and a large circulation does not unaided ensure wealth. In England the newspapers grow rich upon advertisement. Everything that is wanted, and many things that are not, are daily announced in the vast columns which threaten to invade the territory of inapposite gossip and gratuitous discussion. But in the journals of Paris a very modest corner is reserved for advertisement, though the ingenuity of the staff is spent upon the concoction of paragraphs, which appear to be the expression of a free opinion, but which are really highly-paid announcements. How, then, do the newspapers of Paris reward their avaricious staffs, and discharge their printers' bills? By a system of modified blackmail, which is less offensive by its very

cynicism. The city page, as we call it, is commonly let out to the highest bidder for the week, the month, or the year. A lady, greedy for notice, gives a dinner, and she pays the paper to applaud her entertainment. And there are many other methods of turning the power of publicity to account. In the palmy days of the Panamists the journals of Paris were fortunate indeed. They received their stipend from the coffers of the company, and while on the one hand they helped to destroy a great enterprise, on the other they had all the more to spend upon the encouragement of literature. When ruin overcame M. de Lesseps and his colleagues, other enterprises, such as banks and railways, appealed to the forbearance of editors, and later an attempt was made (alas, ineffectually), to force the patronage of letters upon the Parisian clubs. But the clubs not only declined to part with money, but entered so little into the spirit of the game as to bring charges against several eminent editors, and more than one literary gentleman took refuge in prison or in flight.

We record these facts not in any spirit of antagonism to France, but merely because they prove a state of mind which is not ours. Not that we would blindly plead the cause of our own Press. There are many methods of blackmail practised in London with brilliant success. We are all familiar with the disreputable advertisement, for which a higher rate is expected than the ordinary; we all know the simple puff of the new company, which pays for a whole page of "facing matter." But the French, logical to the last, have practised the art of blackmail with a more honest effrontery and to far better purpose. Nor are we speaking without authority. Some years since, when France was perturbed by the charge of blackmail brought against the XIX^{me}

SIECLE, the FIGARO assumed the guilt of the accused, and then with astounding candour justified their wrong-doing. For many years, said the first journal of France, journalists and politicians have met upon common ground, where conscience is voiceless, where honesty is ridiculed, where money alone is king. Ministers accept cheques, deputies sell their votes, the officers of the police betray their secrets, and blackmailers obtain the Legion of Honour that they may carry on their trade with greater dignity and security. Is it then astonishing that the director of a journal should make what he can out of banks, or companies, or clubs? No, it is not astonishing; only when a responsible journal puts so infamous a question, we may answer with another, and ask whether honour is not too high a price to pay for our morning newspaper? But the admission of the FIGARO is at least characteristic, and if it be founded upon truth, the remedy is simple. The police is organised to catch thieves, and so long as the newspaper is our servant and not our master, the police will not always suppress the laws of honour that the blackmailer may drink champagne and wrap himself in fur.

But if we sometimes wonder how the Press of Paris keeps itself in affluence, we need not wonder how it contrives to entertain its readers. It achieves this purpose by the rare talent of perfect arrangement and a light hand. That part of it at least which is not polemical never approaches a serious topic with a serious frown. The citizen may read his FIGARO without lashing himself into a fury or cramming his indolent brain with the platitudes of the political leader-writer. And it is because the FIGARO professes an interest in something else than the scandal of the moment that its influence has endured

for forty years. It does not represent Parisian journalism, for its tradition is all its own; it represents the middle-class intelligence of France. It has no principles and no views. As a rule it is content to follow the lead of its readers; and on the rare occasions on which it has attempted to shape public opinion, it has retreated from the truth directly a falling circulation proved the truth unpalatable. But the real distinction of the FIGARO is the continuity of its method. It remains to-day very much what it was when M. de Villemessant founded it, and M. de Villemessant was a man of genius. Like Delane, he was a master of the ceremonies rather than a writer. He never contributed a single article to his own journal, but he handled his staff as a practical coachman handles a four-in-hand, and not for an instant did he relax his control. If he could not write he could suggest, and many of his most famous articles were inspired and even phrased by the man who never wielded a pen. He was brutal, unscrupulous, self-centred; he knew but one ambition,—success, and but one god,—opportunity. For a while failure dogged his steps, but when once Fortune had smiled upon him, he became the masterful tyrant whom all men feared, and whose posthumous influence still rules the FIGARO. He was hampered neither by loyalty nor respect. A contributor was nothing to him; a single word of disapprobation heard, as M. Daudet says, between the cheese and the pear at breakfast, was sufficient to ensure the discharge of the most trusted colleague. One interest alone dominated him,—the prosperity of the FIGARO, and his judgment told him that the FIGARO was better served by a brilliant succession of occasional contributors, than by the continual scintillation of the same talents. "Every man," said he, with his

habitual frankness, "has one article in his belly;" and it was Villemessant's business to get that article out. One day, for instance, he picked up a sweep in the street, brought him to his office, had him cleaned, and set him down to a writing-table. The sweep achieved his article, and Villemessant was rewarded by the curiosity of all Paris. Thus, while the world of letters passed through the FIGARO, nobody stayed there long, and this fierce editor never hesitated to destroy contracts or to forget services. He professed few opinions, and the one principle which he cherished until the end was to preserve the popularity of his journal. He fought no battle, he led no forlorn hope; he recognised the existence of no man, writer or politician, until he had arrived. To vaunt his skill in prophecy, to say exultantly "I told you so!" was no part of his ambition. He did not gird at the rising generation, he merely ignored it; and thus he fulfilled a useful mission, since it is but just that the old, as well as the young, should have their champion in the Press. He admired fine writing, or said he did; but he knew that it was of no use in his "shop," and the profit of his "shop" was superior in his eyes to the credit of literature. None the less the result of his government was a colossal triumph. He made the FIGARO the perfect representative of the well-fed, gay, intelligent Parisian. The writer, maybe, despised it, but he read it none the less, and he used it too, whenever it served his turn. The first article in the FIGARO was for many years, and still is, the end of every man's desire. To sign it is to pose oneself definitely before the public, whether for praise or blame. To be criticised in it, an honour only paid once in a life-time, is to taste the perfect joy of arrival. Such in brief was the end attained by Villemessant's

cynical opportunism, and it is to the founder's undying glory that the tradition he established remains unbroken to this day.

At Villemessant's death the torch was handed to Francis Magnard, who, besides being an editor cut to the very pattern of his predecessor, was also a writer of force and concision. For many years he contributed a daily comment upon the situation to the columns of his journal, in which he brought to perfection the art of jumping with the cat. He, too, was called a cynic, and a cynic he was, but at least he preserved the FIGARO at the high level of cunning opportunism at which he found it; and he was never persuaded by any private or public interest to outrage the worldly conventions of the founder. Indeed, it was not until last year that the FIGARO for the first time sacrificed its subscription-list to what appeared the cause of truth. It espoused, for a brief week, the cause of M. Zola and of Captain Dreyfus, not, we may well believe, for any abstract love of justice, but because it imprudently thought that it was following the popular lead. However, reparation was speedily made. The editor offered a temporary resignation; the FIGARO printed a public recantation, and hastily brought back its allegiance to the Army. To our more literal appreciation this conduct seems cowardly, or even treacherous. We should argue, and argue sincerely, that before it undertook to be the mouthpiece of M. Zola, the FIGARO had examined the soundness of the novelist's charges, and that once convinced of a judicial error, it could not in honour recede from its campaign. But, would object the editor, the FIGARO's one duty is towards its subscribers, whose approval is more precious to it than the holiest cause; and in accordance

with this doctrine it has occupied a comfortable position on the fence while the French nation has been sundered by strife and scurrility. During the long year of dissension its leading-articles have been written by one hand, and they have varied from day to day according to the supposed demand of the public. The style is always the same: it is only the point of view which shifts; and it is impossible to overpraise the coolness wherewith M. de Cornély (that is the writer's name) endorses to-day the opinion which yesterday he held in horror.

This brief history explains better than pages of commentary the firm grip which the FIGARO retains upon modern France. The best writers (of a certain age) are among its contributors; such criticism as it presents is amicable and old-fashioned; its news is not much less trustworthy than the news provided by its rivals; and at any rate it makes no profession to govern the country or to keep the conscience of the citizens. M. de Cassagnac, the other day, charged it, in a page of brutal logic, with caring for nothing but the till, and of course the charge is well justified; but then M. de Cassagnac is a fierce moralist, who would lay down his life for his gospel, and perhaps when he takes the FIGARO as seriously as he is bound to take himself, he loses the sense of humour. However, let us not forget that the FIGARO represents exceedingly well the respectable, half-informed, semi-cultured good sense of France, and that he who would understand the golden (or leaden) mean of French life, cannot do better than consult its columns.

Next after the FIGARO come the JOURNAL and the ECHO DE PARIS, whose sympathies are wider, and whose resolution to entertain is even more loudly pronounced. In their

columns you may encounter much that is best in the lighter literature of France, and if the wit is commonly too Gallic for our timid taste, he is fastidious indeed who cannot find some amusement in these trivial sheets. A single halfpenny will buy you half a dozen articles, dainty stories, or witty criticism of life, and if in the columns of these prints the reporter has no scope, you can easily dispense with his ministration. But in no sense are they newspapers; a handful of paragraphs records the progress of the world; and each employs a gentleman to misunderstand foreign politics. Moreover, they have both thought fit to take a position, more or less violent, against the champions of Dreyfus, and the ECHO DE PARIS, which should be content with the elegancies, has been charged by the other side with being the creature of the General Staff. But even the Affair will pass away, and then these amiably ribald sheets will again discharge their proper office of frivolity.

Of newspapers as we understand them, there are but two in France, the TEMPS and the DÉBATS, and curiously enough they are both published in the afternoon, not at eleven o'clock, like the second edition of THE PALL MALL GAZETTE or THE GLOBE, but at half-past five, that they may be soberly discussed at the hour of absinthe. These two journals hold aloft the banners of sound Republicanism and patriotic aspiration. Not for them the Gallic wit and the lively jest which are characteristic of the FIGARO or the JOURNAL; their real distinction is an informed severity, which they bring to the consideration of every question. In their columns we meet with our familiar friend, the leading-article, as just, as heavy, as barren as the leading-articles which regale the British citizen as he sits over his plate of ham and eggs. Their

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contributors at least know where England is, aye, and could point out the limits of British South Africa on the map. Of course they are hostile to Great Britain, but their hostility does not irritate us so bitterly as the violent ignorance of the FIGARO. They are adversaries with whom discussion is possible, and from whom we may dissent with courtesy and understanding. Their criticism matches their politics; it is sedate, well-informed, and never sensational. The TEMPS, for example, has entrusted the drama for the last forty years to M. Francisque Sarcey, who has won, with the contempt of the intelligent, the genuine admiration of the people. The FIGARO would have thrown over so ancient a contributor long ago, though it does for the moment print M. Sarcey's good-humoured commonplaces; but the TEMPS cherishes another continuity, and is loyal not only to its opinions, but to its staff. The same careful information, the same rather dull and safe comment, may be noticed in the DÉBATS, and it is with these two papers that France challenges comparison with the graver journals of our own country. The MATIN too, owes something to rivalry with Great Britain; but it is little more than a summary of news, and though it appears a modern invention to Paris, it is rather enterprising than characteristic.

But the most astounding newspapers of France are the daily pamphlets, written to enforce a particular opinion or to damage a particular party. Their unscrupulous virulence has never been surpassed in the world's history. They would be impossible in England, first because nobody cares to be confronted every morning with twelve or sixteen columns of abuse, and secondly because, though the duel is unknown to us, we still have our law against libel. Their vast popu-

larity in France proves more eloquently than records or statistics the nation's decadence. Go where you will in the country, you will find the clergy and its flock reading with common consent and enthusiasm LA LIBRE PAROLE. Now, this journal exists for no other purpose than to fight the Jews, and to advocate in plain terms a new St. Bartholomew. To M. Drumont the Jew is the machinator of universal evil, guilty, without a trial, of every charge that can be brought against him, and whatever you may think of the Jew, it is very easy to make up your mind concerning M. Drumont. The Jew, a poor (or rather a rich) vagrant upon the earth is not, and never has been, a sympathetic figure. His ways are not as our ways: his methods of thought are too subtle even for the comprehension of a French Jesuit; but to see in life no other duty than a combat with Jewry, is to run straight upon imbecility. The only rational explanation for such an attitude as that assumed by LA LIBRE PAROLE is furnished by Lord Beaconsfield in an essay upon his father. "My grandmother," said he, "had imbibed that dislike for her race which the vain are too apt to adopt when they are born to public contempt;" and we can best understand the fanaticism of LA LIBRE PAROLE, if we assume that it is conducted by a staff of disappointed Jews. Whenever a misfortune seems to threaten France, the handiwork of Israel is apparent to these self-styled patriots. For evidence they have no regard; the just statement of a case seems to them superfluous; they are quick to suppress an inconvenient truth, and never once have they been known to retract a false statement. Argument, statesmanship, real love of their country are nothing to them; they have but one feeling of hatred, the Jew, and one method of battle,

abuse. Yet the influence of *LA LIBRE PAROLE* is supreme in France. The Dreyfus Affair was invented by M. Drumont as an opportunity to flout his enemies. Had he not, in 1894, gained a first intelligence of the treachery, and condemned the accused before his name was known even to the Ministers, there would probably have been a fair trial and no scandal. Yet he is perfectly content with the part that he has played, and having been the means of embroiling France in civil war, he still proclaims himself a patriot.

Close upon his heels marches M. Rochefort, whose daily bread for more than thirty years has been scurrility. His method is the method of M. Drumont, but he appeals to a different public. On the eve of his return from exile some years ago a news vendor on the Boulevard said to the present writer, "You won't be able to get a cab to-morrow," and she gave as a reason that Rochefort was the hero of the cabmen, who were resolved to put up their horses and go on foot to meet their idol at the railway-station. So while the priests of France read *LA LIBRE PAROLE* in interludes snatched from their prayers, the cabman devotes whatever time he can spare from the destruction of foot-passengers to the study of M. Rochefort's periods. Doubtless, it is from that master that he has learned the trick of abuse wherewith he discomfits a timid fare, and truly he could not find a better model. For M. Rochefort has but one talent, invective, and that is growing old. He has no principles, no policy, no knowledge; he has simply a vocabulary of insult. Once he used it at the expense of the Emperor; then he turned his gracious attention to the Army and the Church; now his hatred of the Jew has driven him into a tardy alliance with holy-water and the sabre,

and we suppose he would call himself a patriot. Every day he writes in his paper, *L'INTRANSIGEANT*, a diatribe which states little that is true and which proves nothing. He merely gives us a fresh sample of his remarkable talent, and his talent, if limited, is certainly remarkable enough. The man with whom for the moment he does not agree is a "crapulous Jesuit," or a "half-witted, doddering lunatic." To-morrow the same man may appear to act in unison with M. Rochefort; he is then a simple soldier, a brave patriot, a hero burning for the blood of Jews, Freemasons, and Englishmen. The inconsistency counts for nothing; it never does in journals of this kind; the cabman, no doubt, has a short memory, and so long as the gall is in the article, he asks for no other ingredient. For the moment this astounding editor is incensed against the justice of his country; it may be he will champion it to-morrow, but that does not matter. And this was his method of condemning the members of the Court of Appeal. He suggested that they should be drawn up before the Law-Courts, that their eyelids should be cut off, and that walnut-shells, containing venomous spiders, should be tied over the wounds until the eye-balls were greedily devoured. Of course such stuff cannot carry any weight. Words and ideas, so loosely employed, are deprived of meaning, and they would not be worth quoting were it not true that M. Rochefort's influence in France is second only to the influence of one man,—M. Edouard Drumont. In fact, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that for the last four years these two gentlemen have intimidated France. Ministers have hesitated in the execution of their duty to think, "What will Rochefort say of me?" "Shall I win the approval of Drumont?" Secret documents have

been despatched for the contemplation of these two patriots, documents so secret that had they been presented to any other eyes they would have the same effect as the spider in the walnut-shell. Stranger still, when some time since M. Rochefort dragged into a political controversy the name of Mademoiselle de Munster, and when the German Ambassador demanded an apology for this defiance of good manners and international etiquette, the Minister who made the amend dared not mention the name of M. Rochefort. He was content to throw the blame upon an evening paper, which had copied the paragraph from the morning's *INTRANSIGEANT*, and thus he escaped what doubtless seemed to him a terrible possibility of revenge.

So they continue, chartered libertines, abusing what they will, and whom they will. Nothing is sacred to M. Rochefort, and M. Drumont keeps no respect for aught save the Church. Both the one and the other are to-day clamouring that the Chiefs of the Army shall be respected; yet nobody has vilified the Chiefs of the Army so bitterly as M. Rochefort, unless it be his friend and colleague M. Drumont. The champions of the other side limp after these masters in vain. Elsewhere than in Paris they might appear miracles of invective. They, too, Radicals and Socialists and Dreyfusards, were once the friends of M. Rochefort, and they have been reared, so to say, in the same school; but for the moment they are out-matched. Perhaps their cause to-day is so strong that it can be moderately urged; perhaps a sense of logic tells them that M. Rochefort must be fought with other weapons than his own. But the truth is that the fighters of the *AURORE*, the *SIÈCLE*, and the *PETITE REPUBLIQUE* employ eloquence rather than vilification,

reasoning rather than personal affront. They do vilify, they do affront, all of them, every day; but they make a poor show beside their adversaries, and their very failure is half a proof of a just cause.

But it is a sorry spectacle, this government by intimidation, and we are content to turn aside from these journals, which have no resource save invective, to the *AUTORITÉ* and M. de Cassagnac. Now, M. de Cassagnac is a pamphleteer too; he, too, regards his journal as a platform; he, too, excludes light literature from his columns, and is content that the *feuilleton* should be his readers' sole diversion. But he is a pamphleteer with a purpose, with conviction, with a style. The champion of the Napoleonic idea, he has fought the Third Republic with a strenuousness which none of his rivals can surpass; but he fights, and he has always fought, like a gentleman. Honourably impartial, he criticises all parties with the ferocity of a convinced philosopher. He is neither for Dreyfus nor against him. From the very beginning of this dreary business he has pleaded the cause of fairness and no favour. At the first trial he demanded open doors and publicity, and since revision has become necessary he has bowed to revision, asking only that if the generals be proved guilty of misconduct, they shall one and all be shipped to the Devil's Isle. But he is a sane man, M. de Cassagnac, who would fight England like a man, and doubtless accept the inevitable defeat like a hero. He is not anxious, after the manner of MM. Rochefort and Drumont, to suppress the truth; rather would he know the worst, and have time to combat his enemies. Of course the cause which he keeps at heart is not likely to prevail. But for thirty years M. de Cassagnac has been the bitterest and loyalest critic of his

country's misgovernment, and not even his enemies could reproach him or his spirited sheet with dishonesty or lack of patriotism.

But the journals of Paris are like the sand for number, and we can but refer to those that appear characteristic. Yet the pompous GAULOIS, with its advocacy of royalism, its lack of humour, its devotion to the aristocracy, must not be wholly forgotten. It is a sad paper, and it pleads a sad cause. Not even its warmest friends can find much sympathy for the anti-Semitism of M. Arthur Meyer, an acknowledged Jew, nor for the Duc d'Orleans his master, who has committed the sin, unpardonable in France, of seeming ridiculous. Nor must we forget the PETIT JOURNAL, the best organised paper in France, with its million subscribers and its correspondents in all the provinces. Its narrow views and bitter Chauvinism are the more to be regretted on account of its vast influence; but at any rate it is a vast triumph of commercialism, and a newspaper which can charge £4 a line for advertisements is enough to turn the most enterprising proprietor green with envy. Then follow the unnumbered sheets devoted to *le sport* in all its branches, the JOCKEY, the OUTSIDER, and countless others, which have an English sound and yet are very French. But these, characteristic in their lack of knowledge and their hazardous prophecy, are not essential to the nation, and at best, or worst, are but an echo of our own sporting-prints.

Is a comparison then possible between England and France in this matter of newspapers? By all means, if we leave out of account the violent pamphlets which have no counterpart on our side of the Channel, and which, having exhausted in times of peace the lees of abuse, keep nothing but

gasps for the moment of panic. The TEMPS and DÉBATS differ little, as we have said, from our own journals; but they are hardly the vividdest reflection of France, and for the purpose of comparison we will choose the half-dozen which appear most genuinely characteristic. We shall then find that the differences existing between the two sets of newspapers correspond closely to the differences which distinguish the two nations. The English newspapers are more practical, but less amusing. If you wish to know how far the door of a Chinese port is open, it is idle to consult a journal of the Boulevard. On the other hand, should you desire an hour's recreation, it will profit you nothing to open the unwieldy pages of THE TIMES. In other words the English editor spends his money on telegrams, the French editor is extravagant only in the matter of intellect. The practical Englishman, the artistic Frenchman,—that distinction is carried through the whole of life. We do not say that the JOURNAL is the best possible paper; we do say that it could not exist in London with any better hope of prosperity than the FIGARO itself. The Englishman wants news about his friends, about his country, about other peoples' countries; and he wants his news clearly set forth and (to his shame be it spoken) horribly mauled, in Yankee-fashion, with headlines. This love of news too often sinks with us to the lust of gossip. It seems to give the gentleman who never strays further from Norwood than the city, a precious pleasure to know that "Mr. 'Tommy' de Montmorency was looking his brightest and best in the Park on Sunday." Such statements, characteristic in their vulgarity of England, but unknown to France, are, in deed, the vice of our favourite quality. *News, news!* we cry, even though it be unimportant and indiscreet; but,

in revenge, we know what happens in every corner of the globe, and are the better able to fight our battles and to defend our empire. France on the other hand, as represented by her journals, is notoriously ignorant. Her foreign correspondents flatter their editors by gratuitous mis-statements; the gentlemen who daily explain the crimes of England to their readers, are inspired for their task by a monumental lack of knowledge. It was England, for instance, which not only organised the war between Spain and America, but which, also, for some obscure purpose of her own, delayed the signing of the peace. It is England, again, which at this very moment is conspiring with Don Carlos to rob poor Spain of the Balearic Isles. Wherever disease appears, it was brought by England; all the bloodshed and disaster which dishonour the world are due to the guile and cunning of perfidious Albion. But this ignorance is not limited to our serious shortcomings. Sometimes the errors of the French journalist are prodigies of unconscious humour, and we find it hard to reprove the writer who not long since solemnly informed his readers that Lord Salisbury was the son of Disraeli. Does not that make quite clear our brutal success at Fashoda?

In the matter of information and

accuracy then, France is far behind England; in all the qualities of style and arrangement she is infinitely superior. By talent or habit the French journalist writes with better skill and with better taste than his English colleague. True, the leading-article is practically our own invention, and France may congratulate herself on that; but the common police-report, the mere record of a squalid suicide, the latest achievement of Jack Sheppard,—all these are served up to the French public with a daintiness and a wit which are wholly strange to London. Then, again, the French newspaper, by encouraging literature, lays both its readers and contributors under a debt, which in England is imposed by the magazines and reviews. In brief, the Frenchman wishes to smile, the Englishman desires to know. For our part we may be thankful that we are guarded against the scurrility of MM. Rochfort and Drumont, since that way lies national degradation and ruin. We may also render to the FIGARO and its colleagues the admiration which they properly exact. For the rest, let us hope that both French and English will jealously guard their distinguishing characteristics. The differences are in the blood, and no profit ever came of insincere imitation.

A STRANGE EXPERIMENT, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

IV.

I, PAOLO ROSSI, write this memoir that the knowledge of the strangest of mortal experiences may not die with me. Yet so convinced am I of my enemy's wonderful foresight and the unscrupulous use he will make of his power, that I feel sure no other eye (save his, and then but for one reading,) will ever see this paper. Could I fulfil my intention, this should reach your hands, Raffaello, to whom it will be addressed. But this man aims at universal dominion; there is no limit to his ambition; is it likely that he will allow a scrap of paper to stand in his way?

I was seventeen years old when my uncle Luigi died; I am now seventy-eight. I shall not live, nor do I care to live, to be seventy-nine. Nearly seventy years of my long life, as I look back upon them, are commonplace, the ordinary career of a comparatively successful man, born of good family, with wealth, influential connections, and a fairly able mind. Were it not for the occurrences of the past ten years my life could add absolutely nothing to the sum of the world's knowledge, for though respected and deferred to in my time, there have been greater politicians, more successful statesmen than myself, and the name of Paolo Rossi will tell nothing to succeeding generations.

But these ten years! As I look back, they seem so crowded with strange experiences that it bewilders me merely to attempt to set them down.

The very day my uncle died I

mounted to the grotto-chamber. My boyish curiosity was so excited, my imagination was so inflamed by that which he had written, that I could not eat nor sleep nor rest till I was satisfied. Indeed, the thought of the sleeping bandit was the only thing that could distract my mind from its burden of sorrow; for I devotedly loved and sincerely mourned my great uncle, and there never lived a man worthier of the deepest affection, the highest honour, the most lasting esteem,—but I need not praise him to you, Raffaello.

My eyes were red with weeping and my brain was hot and troubled, but as I turned the curious key and entered the lofty chamber, my grief seemed to fall from me. So still, so cool, so airy, so majestic was the place where the bandit had lain nearly half a century, my own personal woe became trivial and passing, the common, universal sorrow, in the austere presence of Death personified.

I carefully closed the door behind me and stepped to the middle of the room. There enclosed in a sealed glass case, so large it was like a small crystal chamber, was Zojas.

He lay upon a sort of couch, his body relaxed but seemingly not rigid, his hands by his side, his head thrown slightly back. The face and hands lacked something of the ghastly pallor of death, and this fact aided perhaps by the soft dim light, which fell only from above, made the figure look like that of a sleeper, not of one who had died more than thirty years before I was born.

My heart fluttered as I stood gazing

upon him, and panic-stricken I was on the point of turning to fly when the exceeding grace and beauty of the figure struck me; the pose of the shapely body so well displayed in the soft, full flowing shirt and tight knee-breeches, the large bright red kerchief knotted loosely about the bare throat, the haughty serenity of the large head with the inscrutable frown of the eye-brows, the stern mouth and chin, and the dark, thick hair falling over the brow. "Oh to see him open his eyes!" I exclaimed in my agitation, and then, fearing that my wish might be granted, I stumbled from the room, hastily locking the door behind me.

I never visited the room from curiosity again. There was something about this man, so feared during his life, which made his rest respected after death. Only when compelled to see that the supply of chemicals piped into the glass case was complete, did I mount to my uncle's laboratory, which adjoined Zojas's chamber. But through all the years there was never a change. The bandit lay there calmly waiting resurrection, all function arrested but seemingly not for ever. Some slight thing, — the wonderful powder my uncle had given — had stopped the mainspring, but the watch was there, apparently as capable as ever. When this strange numbing power should lose its effect, when the hundred years should have passed, would the wheels revolve again, the hands move, the watch resume its busy record of time?

That grand old uncle of mine had already achieved a miracle, for there was not the slightest symptom of decay. Zojas's body lay there unaltered. His soul, — ah, whither had it flown? And suppose my uncle's experiment a failure, what would be the result, simply dissolution or everlasting, unchanging repose?

In time the strange situation familiarised itself so that my mind no longer refused to admit the possibility of an awakening. In fact, I became so interested in the result that fear of death came to mean for me only the balking of my curiosity; and I grew to comprehend my uncle's intense interest, approaching his point of view more and more nearly as the years more widely separated us. I jealously guarded my health so that I should be the one to witness this great miracle; but I made careful provision in case I should die before Zojas's awakening, bequeathing my house and all its contents to you, Raffaelo. You will remember a conversation the meaning of which will be clearer to you now. This memoir and my uncle's last letter, which I have ever kept with me, I intend for you. Yet you will never receive them; of this I feel sure, yet do I write, that haply one chance in ten thousand may bring them to you.

How would it have been if that one severe illness or some accident had carried me off, and you had taken my place? Who can say?

As you know, I busied myself as other men, and the years brought me pain and sorrow, joy and gladness, my small share of fame and my portion of misfortune. I had inherited my uncle's fortune; I could not inherit the mind which had acquired that fortune and made the Rossi name venerated in San Marco and enduringly great throughout the world. I am more practical, less imaginative; my mind is of more tenacious if less elastic material. My uncle hoped that I might follow the profession he graced, and all my early education was toward that end, but my tastes and instincts were all unscientific. His mind spent itself on immaterial things; my life's energies found a natural outlet in

action. My interest in political questions has ever been keen. I served his late Majesty and his father before him. But all that I have done, all that I have suffered in the cause of the State will be forgotten long, long before the glory of Luigi Rossi shall become dim.

V.

CARRY your mind back, Raffaello, ten, fifteen years. You will recall the unsettled state of our country. Everything seemed breaking up; respect for the Government, loyalty to the King,—all had vanished, Heaven knows where! Of a sudden, the people had gone mad. That which they had venerated they now derided; that which they had worshipped they now trailed in the dust; and the higher a thing had been placed, the lower it fell. As the King's minister I laboured with all my might to quell the disturbance, to turn the tide. I have been accused of patricianism, of despising the common people. They call me "Bloody Rossi," remembering how I stamped out rebellion in the west twenty years ago; but I failed to exterminate the rebels, as you know, as all the world now knows, and events hurrying on brought the crisis nearer and nearer. A few of us on one side, the brains, the experience, the culture of the kingdom, and the mad populace on the other; we striving to maintain the old state of things that had endured for centuries, under which our fathers and their fathers had lived in comfort and died peacefully, to preserve the kingdom and loyalty to the King; they surging against and smiting down every barrier we erected, crowding in upon us, driving us further and further back, insatiably exacting privilege after privilege, encroaching, entreat-

ing, threatening, riots in the south-west, rebellion in the mountains, and anarchy in the capital. The crisis came at length; they called upon our King to abdicate.

I laughed aloud when the report was brought to me, and hurrying to the palace, I saw his Majesty. Ah, had he been such a king as his grandfather! I stormed, I ridiculed, I entreated, I wept; I begged to be put in command of the army and in six months, I swore, we should be at peace. The result was merely what it had always been. The King would consider what I had urged; the King would also consider what the Radicals had demanded. In the meantime his Majesty would wait; no good could come of precipitating matters; and he would consider and compromise, compromise and consider, till all option of considering and compromising was taken from him. At length, in despair, I resigned my post.

He tried force when it was too late; he abdicated when it was too late; he was equally unsuccessful whether he tried to pacify or to punish. I knew the abdication would not content them, and when word came that the streets were blockaded and that San Marco, gone mad, was storming the palace, I felt that all was lost. For hours I stood behind the curtained window that fronts the square, not daring to show a light, watching the mob stream by. I would have given my life to be with the King, but I could never have reached him; I should have been hacked to pieces by the savages, had I shown myself.

That night I thought my last hour had come, and after the streets became quiet I sat alone in the dark, (the servants had all fled) waiting, cogitating, planning, regretting. Yet I knew that the monarchy was doomed,

and with bitterness I realised that I had had my share of fortune's favours. After a long, prosperous life misfortune had come to me in my old age, when I could bear it least. Death lay before me, I thought, a violent, hateful death,—or escape and exile. It was like tearing up a tree long planted. We Rossis have lived in San Marco for four centuries and we have rooted deep; the old house was full of memories, freighted with stories of past ambitions, alive with the history of our race. It seemed easier to die than to leave San Marco for ever.

Suddenly a confused murmur came to my ears. It grew louder and louder, and presently the din and turbulence out of doors drew me again to the window. The triumphant people were returning. The glare from their torches flickered into my windows, lighting up the beautiful old, spacious, tapestry-hung apartments. The street was alive with armed men, and I could hear the steady tramp of the militia. I saw the King seated in his carriage, his benevolent, if somewhat weak, face, looking flushed but composed. The tears filled my eyes as I saw him so degraded, so abandoned to his fate. Loyalty, fealty, habit,—what you will—tugged at my heartstrings, and I turned from the window burying my face in my hands.

A shout from without brought me to my feet. Ah, the Guards, the faithful Guards! They had hurried to their King's assistance, and they poured down upon the irregular, half-armed mass of leaderless peasants, mowing them down like grass. The blood leaped to my face at the sight; I forgot my seventy years, and dashing out through the open window I appeared upon the piazza, and, sword high in hand, cheered them on.

A last chance and but a chance, I

kept repeating to myself; for even should they rescue the King, what then? The tide of revolution had set in too strong. Would it sweep all before it, or might it yet be stemmed?

How they fought! It seemed victory must be theirs. And so it should have been, for the mob wavered and fell back, and in a moment the Guards would have been victorious, had not a tall, swarthy savage leaped into the thick of it, bearing all down before him. I myself saw him seize a sword from a soldier, whom he felled with his naked fist. He sprang forward, waving his sword, turning to urge his companions on, and I caught a glimpse of a face that was half-mad, half-dreamy, alive with excitement yet seemingly dazed and bewildered; a strangely foreign face but familiar, with dark flashing eyes that were fearfully compelling. The people dashed after him with a mad yell and he led them on, reckless, bullet-proof; a mark for death in his white shirt,—he wore no coat—yet nothing stayed, nothing injured him. In a moment all was over, the Guards slaughtered, dispersed, the mob triumphant again, bearing the King to his death.

But now it was my turn. They had seen me on the piazza: they had heard my voice urging our gallant Guards on; and with shouts of "Down with bloody Rossi!" they stormed the old place. So it had come. The stout oak doors, built at a time when doors were made for just such usage, would resist for a time, but soon 'twould be all over with me. I stood still, breathless, awaiting them. What could an old man of seventy do against a mob like that? It was ridiculous. In my excitement I laughed aloud, hysterically, angrily, and the clock just

then striking eleven, there was an odd, bizarre combination of sound at which I paused and listened.

I don't know how it came to me; life had been so full, so troubled this past six months that I had forgotten what once had most interested me. The time I had looked forward to since boyhood, longingly, eagerly, had passed in the excitement of a falling kingdom and my own peril.

And Zojas, what of him? At least I would know the end before I died, so that uncle Luigi might not question me in vain when he and I should meet twenty, ten minutes hence.

I hurried up the stairs, forgetting my own agony in anxiety on the dead bandit's account; for there were certain directions I should have followed, certain precautions I should have taken. As I sprang up the last short flight of stairs, I was struck first with horror and then with relief. Yesterday and to-day, I all at once remembered, I had forgotten to supply the chemicals which kept the chamber at the required temperature. Yet by a lucky chance, my unpardonable negligence had been unwitting wisdom. I recalled now my uncle's directions, that I should permit the chamber to gradually resume its normal temperature, and that when the hour struck for the resurrection, the room should glow with warmth; and this was summer. How wonderfully fortunate!

I reached the laboratory door and slammed it behind me; I passed on into the secret chamber. Ah! The room was warm, delightfully warm; the rays of the August sun had beaten down upon the roof all day, and now the atmosphere was palpitating with heat, yet beautifully fresh, so perfect was the ventilation of the great lofty apartment.

I was so delighted that I chuckled with satisfaction; evidently not yet

had good fortune deserted the house of Rossi. I lit the lamp and looked around.

Zojas was gone!

VI.

BUT how was such a thing possible? Who could have removed the body? Who knew of the existence of this chamber but myself? Bewildered, I put my hand to my head and tried to think.

I remembered having opened the glass case several days before, when, in fulfilment of my uncle's orders, I had made preparations for the resuscitation. I had restored the tongue to its place, removed the specially-prepared cotton from nostrils and ears, placed liquors and restoratives at hand and such apparatus as might be necessary should breathing at first be defective. I recalled now how these preparations had absorbed me at the time, how I had lingered, almost lovingly, over this strange work, wondering what the end would be. I hardly hoped for success; I could not bring my mind to realise that changeless recumbent figure, upon which I had looked for half a century, rising, moving, living, speaking. Nevertheless, my curiosity was intense; something would happen,—what?

And after all these years of waiting, after my uncle's minute instructions, his foresight, his exquisitely complete arrangements, the perfection of circumstance for such a trial, my selfish pre-occupation of yesterday and to-day, the cruel chance that had brought about my King's downfall and my own, must happen upon this very day,—almost at the very hour! Ah, Uncle Luigi, can you forgive me? Your great work undone, your hopes blasted, your wonderful experiment a failure! And I whom you

trusted, whom you benefited, whom you loved as a son,—I to blame! My grief and remorse were so great that I fell exhausted, almost fainting, into a chair.

Then suddenly there came a crash; the door had given way! Again I had forgotten. Here was I, a man of seventy weeping over the failure of a scientific experiment, not my own, while in ten minutes, five, nay now, this very moment death stood before me. I heard them storming up the staircase, scattering from room to room like a pack of pestilent animals; destroying what they could never recreate, ransacking the fine old place that the Rossis have loved to beautify, which centuries of intimate association have rendered almost holy. They are at the door! Well, I have lived seventy years; it is enough. Life holds nothing more for me; I am ready.

A crash! The laboratory door is down. Again, that tearing sound of splintering oak, and their leader, bloody sabre in hand, is before me. He is dressed oddly, theatrically, in white flowing shirt and dark knee-breeches, and about his neck—Good God! Am I losing my mind? Then the sooner death comes the better, for if Zojas's face were lighted up by such blazing, imperious eyes, if Zojas were living, this should be he!

I rose and rushed toward him as he stood in the doorway, the swarming, eager crowd behind him. I believed I was going to die, and I sought death; my brain had borne too much, I was mad for rest. But at the sight of the room, the glass case, the couch, my face perhaps, he staggered as if struck. A shout went up from without. They thought I had wounded him, and swarming into the room they bore me down before them. I closed my eyes.

"Off!" their leader yelled. "The

prey is mine, harm him at your peril. Off, I say!" He struck about him with the flat of his sword and raising me from the floor, stood before me. "Comrades," he commanded, beckoning the regular soldiers in, "take this man to the jail. Guard him, let him not escape, but kill, kill without mercy any one who tries to take him from you. Your heads or mine if you fail."

When I reached the prison and was placed in a crowded cell (for the Revolutionists had dragged the city and caught all that was highest and noblest in their net) I fell exhausted upon a cot in the corner, and there despite my terrible situation, the stifling air of the close cell, and the excited, hushed whispering, the moaning and sobbing about me, I fell asleep. My age, the terrible fatigue, the strain of the past six months, and my overwrought condition had prostrated me.

I dreamed all night, but not of my own troubles, nor of the King, nor of the country which was aflame with anarchy. I dreamed of Zojas, always Zojas, fighting like a demon at times, then sleeping his long sleep as serenely, as calmly as during the past years I had so often watched him. Time after time, in my dream, the moment came for his awakening. There seemed to be a faint glow upon that impassive, bronzed face; surely his great chest heaved, his long, brown hand moved, his eyelids twitched; at last I should see the eyes they hid. I bent over intent, breathless,—and waked with a start, to turn uneasily upon my hard bed and fall feverishly to sleep once more to dream the same dream again and again.

Then my dream of the night became my delirium by day, for I fell ill, desperately ill; and through all that terrible time when the King was executed, my old associates in the

ministry murdered, you and all my friends banished or in exile, my beautiful old palace razed to the ground, and the new government established, I was hovering feverishly at the brink of death, babbling of Zojas and my uncle Luigi,—as dead to the great events that were taking place as though I had been a contemporary of my dead uncle, and of the bandit who gave his life to science.

VII.

Ah, how slowly the aged come back to life! Even now I cannot disassociate the reality of that time from delirium. For a time, while I was recovering, I lived in a half-world where facts seemed monstrously unreal and fancy was all I had to build upon.

Truth to tell, the world I had re-entered was so changed that a sound man might disbelieve the evidence of his senses. Our laws and customs had shaped themselves logically, naturally, through the course of centuries. Our form of government had rested upon a broad base,—the great mass of common people below, and above, graduated with almost mechanical accuracy, the superior classes, labourers, merchants, seignors, the priests, the nobility, and at the apex of the governmental pyramid, the King. Now my poor weak, fever-sick brain must suddenly realise that all in a moment, in a mighty convulsion of society, the pyramid had been torn from its solid foundation, hurled aloft and thrown again to earth. But so great had been the force of the overturning that the apex

had been driven deep, deep into the earth,—where our martyred King lies buried. The royal princes come next, they too buried deep. Above, hardly venturing as yet to peer above the ground, comes the old nobility. The parvenus and the rich, who dare not yet proclaim themselves rich or noble, trample upon their superiors, while they in turn are trampled upon by the middle classes. And above all rages the rampant multitude, the ignorant, bestial populace,—the people forsooth!

And how long, pray, can this unnatural state of affairs last? How long can the apex of the social pyramid point downward and serve as a base? Not long, not long; you and I know what the end will be. At first the broad base will lie absolutely level, unnaturally exposed to the light of day. And the ugly crawling things, which have germinated and pullulated in the crevices where in the damp darkness the pyramid's base has rested close to earth, so long undisturbed, these now are at the surface. Now the demagogues rear their brazen heads; little by little they will press upon the mass beneath; each stratum will bear upon the one beneath it; and presently little by little, the old apex will sink lower yet, and little by little, very gradually, a new pyramid will be formed, whose base shall be the old base of society. And when the space on the top becomes too limited, the monsters will turn upon and devour one another, and at length there will be a new apex.

And who will stand on the top?—Zojas!

(To be continued.)

DIPLOMACY AND JOURNALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE."

SIR,—Everyone will cordially acknowledge the weight which must belong to any expression of opinion coming from a writer of Mr. Frederick Greenwood's ability and reputation; yet I doubt whether, outside Fleet Street, anybody will care to go with him all the way in his article on PUBLIC OPINION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS in the last number of this magazine. It is not perhaps so much to any individual proposition that we (for I find many in like predicament with myself) are inclined to take exception, as to the general tone of the paper. Frankly speaking, it is a condemnation of British Diplomacy and a glorification of British Journalism based on no better grounds than those Lucetta assigned for her opinion of Proteus :

I have no other but a woman's reason;
I think him so because I think him so.

Everything is for the best in this best of all possible Presses; everything is for the worst in this worst of all possible Foreign Offices. That is the humour of it. In short, Mr. Greenwood's attitude as the champion of Journalism against the charges of Diplomacy reminds me of nothing so much as of one of Leech's inimitable drawings (during the Chartist riots in 1848 I think it was, but I am quoting from memory,) in which a valiant but very diminutive Special Constable observes to a huge brawny ruffian, "Now, my man, if I kill you it's nothing, but if you kill me, by Jingo, it's murder!"

Mr. Greenwood does indeed admit the possibility that from the restless enterprise of the Press mischief may sometimes come to the country's interests,—by the inopportune disclosure, for example, of pending negotiations; but he considers that it is only in the rarest instances that injury actually occurs, instances so rare indeed that he is unable to call to mind a single recent case. The truth is, he says, that Journalism far more generally assists than thwarts the efforts of Diplomacy. His denunciation of a complaint, which is not infrequently heard, that the activity of the Press has of late years been detrimental to the foreign policy of the country, culminates in the following remarkable passage.

Apparently, therefore, if "Journalism continually undoes the work of Diplomacy," as was said the other day, its worst way of doing it has been hitherto unsuspected. The work of British Diplomacy for many years before 1898, though not its aim, of course, was to bring its own august self to decay and the country to the condition of the negligible. To undo this work it would have been necessary to thwart the whole course and intent of Government policy,—the Gladstonian recedent, the Salisbury concessional. Not to undo but to prosper these foreign policies, Journalism should have tolerated, excused, supported them unceasingly. Inasmuch as it did so it did the right thing, according to what we now hear, but, alas and alack, in aiding the work it helped to destroy the aim. How much better, then, had it "constantly undone the work," instead of combining to put a stop to it at the last moment and after so much mischief!

The inference intended to be drawn from this passage would appear to be that, until the difficulty with regard to Fashoda arose, the foreign policy of the Government had received the consistent support of the Press, but upon that event, public opinion, speaking with the voice of the Press, compelled the Government to abandon the concessional policy (which had hitherto been adopted and would probably have been followed in that instance as well) and maintain a firm front against French aggression.

But what are the facts? In the first place, there are probably very few persons who were aware of the kindly attitude which the Press had taken up towards the Government previously to the autumn of 1898. The majority of us, I fancy, considered that, except for a very few months when the present Government came into power, Conservative and Liberal Ministries alike had had a very fair share of criticism, whether deserved or undeserved. But assuming that Journalism has unceasingly "tolerated, excused, supported," the Ministry of the day, that fact would appear to be due to one of the following causes: either that the "Sovereign People," despite its "good sense and courage" appreciated the policy of the Government; or that Journalism preferred the policy of the Government to the good sense and courage of the Sovereign People. Whichever hypothesis be correct, it would seem to show that, assuming, with Mr. Greenwood, that our foreign policy was wrong, the Ministry was not the only body in error.

In the second place, it must be remembered that on no other occasion, within the last ten years at all events, has there been so unanimous a manifestation of public opinion on a question of foreign policy as was exhibited in the case of Fashoda.

Rarely has the Opposition come so entirely into line with the Government, and the Press of all parties so warmly supported it, as in that instance. Much credit is undoubtedly due to the leaders of the Liberal party and to the Press for that support, since the hands of the Government were thereby strengthened, and its burden most materially lightened. At the same time there is nothing to show that the result would not ultimately have been as it was, even had the Government been left to deal with France single-handed. There is nothing to prove either that the Cabinet of this country would have made any concession in the Soudan, or that the French Government would finally have refused to take a reasonable view of the situation. Negotiations, no doubt, would have been more extended, for the ways of Diplomacy are gentler and more circuitous than those of Journalism; but that the upshot of the affair would have been as it is I, for one, can see no reason to doubt. Fashoda was one of those cases in which Journalism dovetails into and renders more certain and speedy of fulfilment the aims of Diplomacy; but neither in that nor in any other instance could Journalism supersede Diplomacy. Both may work for the same end; but the one does so incessantly and suavely, the other abruptly and intermittently: what in fact is the essence of the one, is merely an accident of the other.

At the commencement of the Fashoda difficulty a complaint was made by some of the French newspapers that, so soon as Lord Salisbury found the country unanimous in supporting him, he assumed a far more decided tone on the question of evacuation than he had ventured upon at first. That he should do so was only to be expected. The great difficulty of a

Foreign Minister, in a country enjoying the supreme blessings of a free Parliament and a free Press, is to ascertain how far he may safely go in putting forward demands and insisting upon them. To threaten a rival State with war, and then to find yourself unsupported by an overwhelming majority of the population, is, as Lord Salisbury recently pointed out, merely to humiliate and injure the prestige of the country. Caution, therefore, is above all things needful in the conduct of foreign affairs. The Minister can seldom make an unalterable demand until he has probed public opinion upon the point. The rival Government is also watching, and if it sees the Press taking divergent views it will, of course, be encouraged to resist the Minister's demands. How often does the Press exhibit that unanimity of opinion which would enable a Minister to insist upon a disputed point without fear of being subsequently compelled to change his tone? In the initial stages of the dispute, at all events, Mr. Greenwood would, I suspect, be puzzled to find more instances of such unanimity than he is able to recall of the mischief wrought to Diplomacy by the indiscreet activity of Journalism. It is but rarely indeed that the various sections of the Press join hands with such speed and determination as was shown in the case of Fashoda. More often the fact that one section of the Press advocates one course of action is sufficient, when combined with constitutionally differing standards of judgment, to induce another section (no doubt in perfect honesty) to suspect the wisdom of that course and advocate a diametrically opposite one. Although all are for the State, their views of what is for the State's welfare differ considerably; and so, even in the direction in which Jour-

nalism might most assist Diplomacy, it usually fails to have that effect.

So far, then, although Diplomacy and Journalism do not combine to forward the interests of the country so often as they might do, that is not on account of any natural hostility between them. Their aims are not antagonistic, but they lie on entirely different planes. It might be that if more communication between them were possible, Journalism might assist Diplomacy more frequently than it does. If official communications could be issued to the Press without detriment to the public interest, much good might be done both by satisfying public opinion that things were going well, and by showing foreign Governments that the country was agreed upon the main issue of its foreign policy. But unfortunately a communication of any importance to the British public is also a communication to every foreign Government and people. That is the whole crux of the situation. No Minister would be averse from communicating the secrets of his policy to his own people if he could be sure that the information would go no further. It would relieve him of an immense load of responsibility if he could take the opinion of the nation upon every matter of difficulty; but whether such a scheme, if feasible, would make for the welfare of the country in the long run must remain a matter of speculation. Personally I should prefer too much to too little secrecy.

Having admitted that there are directions in which Journalism may, and sometimes does, work in common with Diplomacy, it remains to point out a field in which their interests seem destined to be in a continual state of opposition. I will not now lay stress upon the fact that at times revelations in the Press may open the eyes of a foreign Government to the

conduct of negotiations between the home Government and a third Power, and so prevent them from being brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Upon that point I will only say that the possibility is too obvious to be denied, and that, although Mr. Greenwood is sceptical as to the actual occurrence of such a state of things within the past twelve months, many of his readers will possibly doubt whether his scepticism be well founded. With that I will pass to a question of more immediate moment, because it more often arises, and is at the moment of writing threatening our relations with France.

The main function of an Ambassador is to smoothe the relations between his own Government and that of the country to which he is accredited. He must watch for possible points of disagreement, and do his utmost to prevent them from developing into active hostility, and his efforts towards this end are not generally rendered more easy of accomplishment by the comments of the newspapers at home. It is, I believe, the opinion of an eminent journalist that the entire crusade of the Press and of the leaders of the Opposition in the Fashoda crisis was unnecessary and undesirable. I do not share that opinion; I think that it assisted the Government out of a difficult situation by proving to French politicians that this country's mind was fixed for evacuation or war. But, at the same time, that the comments of the Press went further than was absolutely needful to attain the aims of Diplomacy, and in consequence produced an unnecessarily embittered feeling, it is impossible to doubt. And after all it is not to be wondered at. A newspaper is not a philanthropic but a commercial undertaking, and the primary object of its directors must be to obtain financial support. That

support can only be gained by catering for the tastes of the public; and the public, whether it be English, French, or German, looks for a little sensation in its newspapers, and likes its mental sustenance somewhat highly spiced. Editors cannot afford to ignore a subject because it may irritate foreign opinion. Their readers expect information upon it, and are dissatisfied if they find that information in some other paper and not in their own. No doubt many an Editor honestly recognises, and does his best to conform to his responsibility as a citizen, though I cannot but think that Mr. Greenwood's ideal Editor, who would appear to combine in his single person the special knowledge, foresight, and experience of a whole Cabinet, must be somewhat rare even in Fleet Street. But the difference between an Editor and a Foreign Secretary in such matters is, I should suppose, this: first, that the Editor, not having so wide a horizon as the Secretary, may not see the harm of publishing a piece of news, although it would be obvious to the Secretary; and, secondly, that if there was a doubt as to the risk of publication, the Editor would be certain to take it in the interests of his journal, while the Secretary would be equally certain not to take it in the interests of his country. Both would be right, each in that state of life into which he has been called; but which would be playing best the part of the good citizen?

The fact of the matter is that the Editor has to serve two masters, his country's welfare and the reading public; and that while secrecy best promotes the first, at any rate in the sphere of foreign politics, publicity is most pleasing to the other. If the information, and the comments thereon, went no further than those for whom they were originally intended, no harm would be done. But the

information occasionally (I do not say often) puts a rival Government on the track of negotiations of which it was previously unaware, and so assists to foil them; while comments irritate foreign politicians and inflame public passion abroad, and so render the diplomatist's work more difficult. Writing to Bismarck in 1879, the Emperor of Germany is reported by Dr. Busch to have said: "The Emperor [of Russia] regrets having written the letter, as it has given rise to misunderstandings; as the words *ce qui doit avoir des suites fâcheuses et dangereuses* should absolutely not be regarded as threatening a rupture, but only as directing my attention to the fact that if some restraint were not placed upon the Press, ill-feeling might arise between our two countries, which neither of us desired, and therefore measures should be taken accordingly." Much as this country owes to Journalism, beneficial as the liberty of the Press has undoubtedly been in most directions, I cannot but think, Sir, that in foreign politics its tendency is to hamper our diplomatists in their dealings with the statesmen of such countries as Russia and France. To say this, is merely to point out that even democratic institutions have drawbacks as well as advantages.

Is there a remedy for this, and if so what is it? Mr. Greenwood asks for permission to know just as much of the outlines of British foreign policy as every intelligent Russian peasant knows of what the Czar intends to make of Russia. That is, indeed, a moderate request, — so moderate, in fact, that it is impossible to regard it seriously. Are we in all gravity to be asked to believe that the educated Englishman understands less of Lord Salisbury's intentions than the Russian peasant, illiterate and half-starved, compre-

hends of the aims of the Sovereign of the largest military power in the world, unhampered by constitutional and Parliamentary limitations, or, as perhaps one should more truly say, of the aims of that most astute of Foreign Ministers, Count Mouravieff? The idea is too preposterous to be entertained for a moment, and one can only suppose that Mr. Greenwood has allowed a facile pen to run away with him, as facile pens occasionally will. "What is not imposture is willingly respected;" but who is to say whether information is rightly kept back until he knows what that information is? And even then the question must be largely a matter of opinion, which it is idle to pretend that even Carlyle's (or Mr. Greenwood's) ablest Editor can have the means of forming enjoyed by a Prime Minister. The truth is that, as in matters of business shareholders must repose confidence in the discretion of their directors if they do not wish to injure their company's interests, so, in matters of foreign policy, a nation must be content to trust mainly to the discretion of the Ministers whom it has appointed. Every business man knows that in business matters secrecy is at times essential to success, and secrets confided to a large number of persons are secrets no longer. All that can be done is to elect men of ability and honour, and to give them a free hand. To attempt to dictate to them how much they shall tell and how much keep secret is merely to hamper their movements. There is much in Diplomacy, as Mr. Greenwood admits, which cannot be divulged without mischief, and it is surely for those who have the knowledge, and not for those who have it not, to say how much may be revealed with safety. They bear the burden of responsibility

if things go wrong; assuredly they ought to be allowed considerable latitude in the methods they may see fit to adopt to bring the affairs of the nation to a successful issue. If Ministers are wrong, they pay the penalty by dismissal from office; but to be continually finding fault with them is in all probability to drive them into mistakes which they would not otherwise have committed.

If further information could safely be given, no doubt, Sir, it would be to the advantage of everyone, but, as I have already said, if that were the case such information would presumably be given in order to relieve the Ministry from responsibility. One cannot, however, I fear, expect much more openness in these matters, the greater complexity of our foreign relations in recent years leading one to look for more secrecy rather than less in the future. A possible way out of the difficulty would be to

create a small joint committee of the two Houses, corresponding to the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States. The members would, of course, be bound to secrecy, and to them the Government might confide its difficulties. As they would not be holders of office it might be that the public,—or, let us say, the newspapers, for it is from them, I suspect, that this cry comes, the public being, I take it, in the main very well content with things as they are—that the newspapers, then, would place greater confidence in their power of discriminating between what should be kept secret and what revealed, than they apparently do in the discretion of the Cabinet. The experiment at any rate might be worth consideration.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

TEMPLAR.

London,
January 14th, 1899.

MR. WATTS-DUNTON AND HIS REVIEWERS.

BY A COUNTRY COUSIN.

LIVING almost out of the world, a student of old books rather than of new ones, I yet became aware last autumn that some event of unusual importance in the history of literature had taken place. Something had happened, something very delightful yet rather solemn, for which "that microscopic section of the public which concerns itself with nothing that is not 'literature' in the highest and best sense of the word" (I owe this effective phrase to *THE LITERARY WORLD*) had long been waiting; something in which even we of the common herd, who are concerned with so many things which cannot be called literature in any sense of the word, were to have some small part.

The microscopic section had known, it seemed, for years that Mr. Watts-Dunton had in his possession a hidden treasure which it was hoped he would some day consent to reveal to a wondering universe; to the rest of us, the uninitiated, who are not intimately acquainted with "the inner world of contemporary letters," the appearance of *AYLWIN* was fraught, at first, with no particular significance. My attention, in fact, was only drawn to the book by the acclamations with which the reviewers greeted it. I am not a very determined novel-reader, and a considerable amount of contemporary fiction passes me by unheeded, but the terms in which *AYLWIN* was described awakened my curiosity. In the opinion of the critics it was

a very remarkable work; and very remarkable too, in its way, was the generous unanimity which ran like a golden thread through all the newspapers from *THE TIMES* to *THE ECHO*. We hear a good deal of the jealousies which are reported to disfigure the literary profession, but there was no trace of them here; the reviewers all vied with one another in their eagerness to do honour to their illustrious colleague. Nothing so moving as *AYLWIN* had appeared, it seemed, for a very long time,—one writer thought since *HAMLET*; the value of the work to English literature could hardly be over-estimated;¹ there was not a character in it which was not life-like, distinctive, and original; there was humour in it, rising at times to high comedy, but no sensitive person could read it without scalding tears; it was full of allegorical significance, it revealed a penetrating philosophy, it reviewed the intellectual movements of the age, it might be regarded as an optimistic confronting of the cosmogony; and still, as a story, it was passionate, convincing, absorbing, enthralling, vivid, noble, and intense; every page bore marks of the ripest maturity, and yet if it had been published anonymously, it would have been hailed by all our leading critics

¹ This and the following phrases are quoted from *THE BOOKMAN* (November), *THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW* (December), *THE DAILY NEWS* (October 15th), *THE DAILY CHRONICLE* (October 15th), *LITERATURE* (October 29th), and *THE LITERARY WORLD* (October 28th).

(but is not this a little hard upon our leading critics ?) as the first-fruits of the genius of some new marvellous boy ; there were great painters in it who were also great thinkers, and the great thoughts they thought ; and no one but Mr. Watts-Dunton could possibly have written it. Six or seven weeks after its publication, it went into its ninth edition ; and we were told that we "might conjecture" that the author "was not too much humiliated" by this fact.

Naturally the reviewers differed on points of detail. LITERATURE called AYLWIN a poem in prose, while THE ATHENÆUM warned us that the manufacture of poetic prose was not one of the author's aims ; THE DAILY CHRONICLE thought it in some sense a didactic novel, though "the writer shrinks from asserting more than the spiritualistic conception of the cosmos ;" to THE DAILY NEWS it seemed in the main "a novel of recollections," "eminently reminiscential in suggestion ;" THE BOOKMAN prettily termed it "a novel of the two Bohemias ;" and LITERATURE again questioned whether it were a novel at all. Most of the writers hinted that the book was "occasionally autobiographical ;" it was left for THE ATHENÆUM to assure us authoritatively (and who should know if not THE ATHENÆUM ?) that AYLWIN has taken us all so far into Mr. Watts-Dunton's confidence, that we may henceforth identify ourselves "to an almost painful degree" with him, as well as with his creations,—a very exciting prospect. There was some uncertainty about the real people who are introduced into the narrative. When a friend thrusts a photograph into one's hand with an enthusiastic cry of *Isn't it like ?* it is always a little awkward to confess that one has no idea whom it is intended to represent ; and some

such air of embarrassment seemed to hang about AYLWIN's reviewers. They evidently felt that they should have been able to recognise the portraits at a glance, but had not succeeded in doing so. They were all certain that D'Arcy stood for Rossetti, —he is so happily associated with an Indian bull and a wombat that there is no mistaking him ; and THE DAILY CHRONICLE, with native audacity, declared that if the other painter, Wilderspin, had been or could have been a Wesleyan-Methodist, he might perhaps have represented James Smetham. But beyond this they did not care to go, contenting themselves with hinting that they could if they would, but they wouldn't, or, as THE DAILY CHRONICLE put it, "conjectures might be hazarded, but we refrain."

Even those characteristics which in another writer might have appeared defects, were applauded here as ornaments. LITERATURE asserted (in what seemed for an experienced reviewer an incredibly sanguine spirit) that "from the ordinary novel one expects coherency of plot, a stern attention to probability, and a clear presentation of understandable facts ;" "viewed from this standpoint the book suffers from comparison with many of its inferiors," and it was apparently all the better for that. "To the up-to-date novelist," said another critic, "rapidity of development is everything. The characters are not many and are brought upon the scene in the early pages of the story. This is as it should be ;" he goes on to explain that the method adopted in AYLWIN is the reverse of this, but that is also as it should be. THE ATHENÆUM noted the "comparative absence of the purely literary quality" from the style and seemed to congratulate us upon it ; "it would have been easy," it continued, "for Mr. Watts-Dunton to endow his work

with patches of rhetoric more or less ornate,—such patches as might have been looked for in ordinary circumstances from an acknowledged master of English prose," but he has "disregarded this temptation." I venture to suggest in passing, that it is a mistake for literary journals to assume that their readers are as familiar as themselves with the best models. I, for one, have no idea of the kind of patch with which a master of English, or of any other, prose endows his work in ordinary circumstances; I did not even know that he was expected to endow it with patches at all, and I doubt if I am alone in my ignorance.

The author of this masterpiece was compared or contrasted in turn with many notable writers—with Shakespeare, because Ophelia was mad and so was Winnie Wynne; with Borrow, because there are gipsies in *LAVENGRO* and gipsies in *AYLWIN*; with Balzac and Ibsen, because there is heredity in *LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE* and in *GHOSTS*, and something that passes for heredity in *AYLWIN*; with Prévost, because there is sentiment in *MANON LESCAUT*, and sentiment (but of a better quality) in *AYLWIN*; with Goethe, because,—I forget why the author of *AYLWIN* was like Goethe, but I remember that if Tennyson had kept *MAUD* by him for some years before publishing it, there would have been some ground of comparison between him and Mr. Watts-Dunton. I was particularly impressed by the tribute offered to *AYLWIN* in the journal which pledged itself, not long since, to oppose the common vice of extravagant laudation. "The passion of love revealed in this book" says the writer in *LITERATURE* "is that of noble strength on fire. Beyond, but rising out of this, is a new and convincing spiritual outlook; new because it is above and beyond the narrow outlook which prevails in contempo-

rary literature, convincing because it comes out of the depth of spiritual emotion and so has a sweep and intensity of vision that none may wholly withstand. The spiritual intensity of the book indeed is its fundamental strength and the root of its strange flower of beauty. *AYLWIN* is in this respect a fitting book wherewith to let the passing century stand as it were a-poise."

I laid down the review and tried to picture to myself the passing century,—the century of Byron and Scott, of Keats and Shelley, of Wordsworth and Tennyson, of Dickens and Thackeray, of Macaulay and Ruskin and Newman—standing as it were a-poise with Mr. Watts-Dunton's volume in her hand; but my thoughts wandered to nothing more consequent than a couple of lines which have as fair a chance of immortality as many more ambitious efforts,—

The carpenter said nothing but
The butler's spread too thick.

The only note in this harmonious chorus that gave me a moment's uneasiness, was a phrase in *THE ATHENEUM* which spoke of *AYLWIN* as a prose counterpart of *THE COMING OF LOVE*. I must explain that, although I had long heard of Mr. Watts-Dunton, not merely as our greatest critic but as almost our only living poet (not counting minors), I had only recently read his poems. This was not due to any particular prejudice, but to a general disinclination to acquaint myself with any poetry that is not at least five years old. We can not all read everything, and some are too indolent to try; so for the most part I leave the newest bards respectfully alone. In view however of the commotion caused by the approach of *AYLWIN*, I had departed from my usual practice and had resolved to study *THE COMING OF*

LOVE. "A work to which the student and the literary historian must turn with feelings of reverence for many generations to come" — "In Coleridgean mastery of supernatural glamour, the poems are amongst the most remarkable published for many years" — "Superb writing with its chances for all time" — these were some of the utterances to be found among the Press notices at the end of the volume, and thus inspirited I made a gallant attempt to read it. Had I known then what I know now, namely that *THE COMING OF LOVE* is "an attempt to deal with the deepest enigmas of human, indeed of cosmical destiny, and at the same time to write an almost realistic poem about a gipsy-girl,"¹ I should have been saved the useless effort, but I was not warned in time.

Thanks to the prose directions with which the course of the poem was plentifully interspersed, I had but little difficulty in following what there was of the story; nor was I dismayed by the gorgeous regularity of the imagery or by such lines as these which occasionally relieved it,—

'Tis I, thy friend, who once, a child of
six,
To find where Mother Carey fed her
chicks,
Climbed up the boat and then with
bramble sticks
Tried all in vain to scull—

and this which I came upon by chance
in the middle of the book,—

Again I feel the pang when trying to
choke—

which have as much of the Wordsworthian simplicity as of the Coleridgean glamour. It was not till I encountered such passages as,—

¹ See *THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW* for December, 1893.

De blessed chi ud give de chollo
O' Bozzle's breed,—tans, vardey, greis,
and all,
To see dat tarno rye of hers palall—

and,—

Bal, danniers, canners, yockers, moey,
nock:
My daddy's bort me sich a nicet new
frock—

that I fell back daunted. These metrical beauties did not, in truth, inspire me with any great passion to read their prose counterpart, but I overcame my misgivings, arguing with myself that an indifferent poet may yet be an admirable novelist, and that it was unlikely that Mr. Watts-Dunton's name on a title-page should so dazzle the critics a second time as to make them mislead the simple souls who look to them for guidance. I sent therefore for *AYLWIN* and read it with the greatest attention.

THE DAILY CHRONICLE, in its large-hearted advocacy of the work, declares that it is the author's lot to please everyone, including the superior person, providing only that the superior person is honest. I have no claim to a place on that superior journal's list of superior persons (Heaven forbid!), but I do try to be honest and sometimes I really believe that I succeed. Honestly, then, I cannot agree with those critics who seem to regard *AYLWIN* as a flawless masterpiece; and before condemning me as captious, perverse, or dishonest, I would plead with them to remember how few things there are in this world which answer exactly to that description. The part of *Devil's Advocate* is never an amiable one to take upon oneself, yet since there are always a few persons who are interested in hearing the views of the minority I venture to indicate what seem to me some of *AYLWIN*'s shortcomings.

I should say first that I am considering the book as a novel, or at least as a romance. Several of its reviewers in their "first fine careless rapture" described it as a novel, and immediately proceeded to criticise it as something else. To do this is to ignore the first principles of criticism. Imagine for a moment the confusion which must result were Whitaker's *Almanac* to be reviewed, say, as an epic poem. Regarded in that light, it would be a most inadequate performance; we should miss in it the heroic stuff of which epics are made, the stately diction, every element in fact of the lofty and the sublime. It would be useless for Mr. Whitaker to urge that his volume was running over with valuable information about the Patent Office and the City Companies and tides and tidal waves; the presence of such extraneous matters in an epic would only aggravate his offence. There is no critic capable of doing Mr. Whitaker so flagrant an injustice, but there are many who see no harm in reviewing a novel as an autobiographical sketch, or as a prose poem, or as a concrete expression of the author's theory of the universe. If the arbitrary limits of time and space permitted, I would gladly join them (in defiance of critical principles) in discussing *AYLWIN* as any or all of these things; but at present I can only judge it in its primary aspect, that is to say, as a romance. For the benefit of those who have not read the book (and the number may be larger than is generally suspected) I had better begin by giving some account of the plot.

At the time of his first wife's tragic death, Philip Aylwin, of Raxton Hall, was "a simple, happy, country squire;" but Henry, his son by a second marriage, was still a boy when his father was already a fair Hebrew scholar, an ardent numismatist, and an

extremely learned Latter-Day mystic, with a knowledge of Sanscrit, Arabic and Persian, a deep-rooted passion for philology, and the largest collection of St. Helena coins in England. He was in the habit of going to Switzerland to indulge in "spiritualistic orgies" without his wife's knowledge, and it was during one of these expeditions that Henry was entrusted with the sacred secret on which the story turns. His father showed him a jewelled cross which had been the first Mrs. Aylwin's most cherished possession, and asked him to promise that it should be buried with him. It seemed a harmless fancy, but Henry who was eighteen and a confirmed materialist thought it "savoured of superstition" and "hesitated to become a party to such an undertaking." He pointed out to his father that the cross would certainly be stolen, but Mr. Aylwin had foreseen this objection. His coffin was to be guarded by a curse written in Hebrew and English; he had "printed the English version in large letters so that any would-be despoiler must see it and read it at once by the dimmest lantern light." He had not taken the same trouble with the Hebrew, perhaps because it was unlikely that the intending despoiler would be able to read Hebrew however plainly it was printed. "If on my death-bed," he continued, "I thought this beloved cross would ever get into other hands, I should die a maniac."

This appeal only "irritated and hardened" Henry, who thought his father was behaving like a maniac already, but he ended by giving the required promise. It is easy to guess the sequel. Mr. Aylwin died and was buried in the crypt of the old church on the cliff, but even on the day of the funeral Mrs. Aylwin was uneasy about the jewels. She suspected Wynne (the disreputable

father of the beautiful Winifred whom Henry had loved from childhood) of evil designs, but Henry told her she was unjust; "Wynne," he said, "though poor and degraded now, is a gentleman born and is no more likely to violate a tomb than the best Aylwin that ever lived." That evening, however, a sense of undefined dread came over him. "Why did I move from room to room? What was goading me? . . . It was too hideous to confront. Why *should* I confront it?" Then he decided that the idea was "a figment of an over-wrought brain." "Destiny would never play any man a trick like that which I have dared to dream of. Among human calamities it would be at once the most shocking and the most whimsical. . . . For a man to love, to dote upon a girl whose father is the violator of his own father's tomb [his emotion here got the better of his pronouns but we know what he meant], a wretch who has called down upon himself the most terrible curse of a dead man that has ever been uttered,—that would be a fate too fantastically cruel to be permitted by Heaven."

He then thought of going to bed, but instead he leaned out of the window and gazed towards the church where, he reflected, "the sin of sacrilege might at this moment be going on." And so indeed it was. The degraded and ungentlemanly Wynne opened the coffin that night and stole the jewels, apparently without sitting down first to read the curse which began to work without loss of time. It overtook the robber in the shape of a landslip which killed him on his way home; and the discovery of his body, with the cross upon it, was too much for his daughter's brain. Winifred had previously found the curse blowing about the beach, and knew too well the fate that must

befall the despoiler's child; she wandered distraught into the Welsh mountains, and Henry, ordering a portmanteau to be packed and placing in it all his ready cash (an imprudent thing to do), set out in pursuit.

He did not discover her until her senses had been restored by the self-sacrifice of the gipsy Sinfi, who fell in love with Aylwin and resolved to make him happy at any cost. Sinfi overheard the painter D'Arcy and a Doctor Mivart discussing a means, known to the staff of the Salpêtrière, of transferring hysterical symptoms from one patient to another by a powerful magnet, and she says in her simple way: "Gorgio cuss can't touch Romany. But if you find you can pass the cuss on to me, I'll stand the cuss all the same." Her offer is accepted; two couches are placed side by side, with a large magnet between them, and presently Winifred is perfectly sane, while poor Sinfi is, in her own words, "a-grinnin' and a-jabberin' under the cuss." The curse, however soon works itself out of her system and the book ends happily and morally with Winifred saying to her lover, "Become a painter, Henry! Become a painter! No man ever yet satisfied a true woman who did not work—work hard at something—anything—if not in the active affairs of life, in the world of art."

"Thus crudely put," says THE BOOKMAN (referring to its own summary of the story, not to mine,) "the plot may sound sensational, melodramatic," and here the BOOKMAN and I are agreed; "but that," it goes on loyally, "is where the master's art comes in," and about that I cannot feel so certain. However, the plot of a romance is not generally considered its most important point; it is the vitality of the characters, the brightness of the narrative, the charm of the style which decide its fate. All

we ask of the people in a romance is that they should do something interesting and do it as if they were alive. In these respects, I regret to say, *AYLWIN* is a failure. As a romance, it is dull,—and let me observe here how advisable it is to define one's position at the outset, for if we were considering it in one of the many other aspects in which its reviewers have beheld it, as an optimistic confronting of the cosmogony, for instance, we could not justly find this fault with it; it would be unfair to expect a confronting of the cosmogony, however optimistic, to sparkle with wit or to throb with passion. But a romance is a very different thing; at least it should be different, though in this case it is not. "The reader," says *LITERATURE* hopefully, "soon gets into the right spirit;" but this is only true if the right spirit for novel-reading is a resolute determination to complete an undertaking, however difficult or distasteful it may be.

It may seem paradoxical to attribute the dulness of *AYLWIN* partly to the fact that there are too many lunatics in it, but the truth is that, while one lunatic is always welcome in a work of fiction, particularly if he has a homicidal tendency, five are more than enough. In *AYLWIN* the father of the hero is a monomaniac; the heroine loses her reason on page 118 and does not recover it until the end of the story; the mind of Sinfie the gipsy is temporarily unhinged; the painter Wilderspin is sufficiently off his balance to believe that his dead mother, the female blacksmith of Oldhill, has sent him a "spiritual body" to serve as a model; and when the hero "bounds along the pavement, as though propelled by wings, scarcely seeming to touch the pavement with his feet," uttering meanwhile "mad peals of derisive laughter" and stopping (as we might have been left to

guess for ourselves) "in a cold perspiration," he must have been within measurable distance of bounding into the nearest police-station, to be relegated thence to Hanwell. The presence of so many deranged persons in a story produces an atmosphere of oppressive monotony; and when it is added that Winifred's father was a drunkard, that Mrs. Gudgeon, the model, was another, and that Henry's mother was a prey to the agonies of remorse, it is not surprising that some of us find the novel rather heavy reading.

Another explanation of the dulness of *AYLWIN* may be found in the high moral key in which the conversations are pitched. When Henry told Winifred he loved her, at first she only said, "Oh, sir! Oh, Henry!" and when he asked her to be his wife, "she gave one hysterical sob, and swayed till she nearly fell on the sand, and said while her face shone like a pearl, 'Henry's wife!'" But she soon recovered sufficiently to reply in a manner which convinced Henry that she was "more than his own equal in culture." She told him she could not marry a rich man because her Welsh aunt had told her "dreadful things about the demoralising power of riches in our time." "Dreadful things?" says Henry; "what were they, Winnie?" "She told me," says Winnie, "how insatiable is the greed for pleasure at this time. She told me that the passion of vanity . . . has taken the form of money-worship in our time, sapping all the noblest instincts in men and women. . . . She told me dreadful stories about children with expectations of great wealth . . . who counted the years and months and days that kept them from the gold which modern society finds to be more precious than honour, family, heroism, genius, and all that was held precious in less

materialised times." Yet there was a chance for Henry. "But still I hope and believe that in a year's time prosperity will not have worked in you any of the mischief that my aunt feared. For you have a noble nature, Henry, and to spoil you will not be easy." The young man was profoundly affected, as well he might be, by these sentiments. When she announced her intention of becoming a governess, he answered bravely, that "to show you that the leprosy of wealth you dread has not destroyed me as a man," he would still marry her in a year's time; and when they met after their sad separation, one of his first questions was, "Has the hardening effect of wealth coarsened my expression?"

This is a tone too lofty to capture the sympathy of the ordinary reader, perhaps because the materialised times, in which, by no fault of his own, he lives, have hardened his sensibilities. It seems to him impossible to imagine a girl of seventeen talking as Winifred does; and if it were not impossible, it would still be extremely unpleasant. It is only fair, however, to add that she could unbend on occasion. She had proposed, for example, to make Henry's pies when they were married, and to this he had objected. "Because," said he, "let me once taste something made by those tanned fingers and how could I ever afterwards eat anything made by a man-cook? I should say to that poor cook, 'Where is the Winifred flavour, cook? I don't taste those tanned fingers here.' And then suppose you were to die first, Winifred, why I should have to starve, just for want of a little Winifred flavour in the pie-crust." This ponderous playfulness amused Winifred immensely. "Oh, Hal, you dear, dear fellow," she shrieked, in an ecstasy of delight at this nonsense."

We are a little prejudiced against Winifred ("the dream creature" of LITERATURE) by a "pale-faced lady of extraordinary culture," who tells Henry that "the sweet girl he is seeking is one of the most gifted young women living." I cannot believe that to call any girl a gifted young woman is to do her true kindness; but even that is less objectionable than Winifred's habit of uttering "heart-quelling yells" as she leaps away (she is extremely agile) from her pursuers. A modern heroine is permitted a large amount of licence: she may be anything from a telegraph-clerk to a pirate; but there are still a few things she must not do if she values the reader's regard, and this is one of them. Winifred might have wept or wailed to a considerable extent without estranging us from her; we cannot like the dream-creature when she yells. But perhaps this habit of hers is significant of the deliberate unconventionality at which the author aims. "AYLWIN is not quite like,—in fact it is most unlike—any book that ever preceded it," says THE BOOKMAN, and in some respects this is certainly true. I cannot recall any hero of romance who is permitted to behave as Aylwin does, for instance, when he discovers his lost sweetheart alone in a Welsh cottage. Plunged in meditation, she cannot be induced to take any notice of him, so he goes outside and thunders frantically on the front-door, and when that has no effect, he re-enters the house. "There [curiously enough] she was, sitting immovably before the fire, in the same reverie. I coughed and hemmed, softly at first, then more loudly, finally with such vigour that I ran the risk of damaging my throat. . . . That she should still be unconscious of my presence was unaccountable, for I stood at the end of the rug gazing at

her. Again I coughed and hemmed, but without producing the smallest effect. . . . Finally I gave a desperate 'Halloo.' This description of the devoted lover coughing and hallooing at his betrothed, at the risk of damaging his throat, has no parallel, so far as I know, in romantic literature. It is, as THE BOOKMAN says of the whole volume, "all Mr. Watts-Dunton's own."

Almost as trying in its way as Winnie's excursions into the field of comparative morality, is Henry's habit of halting on his way through the narrative to utter reflections which he, poor boy, evidently believes to be perfectly novel. "Among all the agents of soul-torture that have ever stung mankind to madness, Remorse is by far the most appalling; of all man's faculties imagination is the most lawless; human personality is the crowning wonder of the universe;"—these are conclusions at which he arrives after much intellectual effort, and he records them with a confidence in their complete originality which would be pathetic if it were not pretentious and tiresome.

The two least depressing people in the book are the gipsy Sinfi and Lord Sleaford. I cannot go quite so far as to join the writer in LITERATURE in ranking any of Mr. Watts-Dunton's women with "the few immortal women of the imagination,"—with Desdemona and Rosalind, for example, with Beatrice Esmond and Diana Vernon—but if Sinfi had been a little less loquacious, and her English a little less grotesque, she would have been a delightful girl. Lord Sleaford, too, is quite entertaining; but he is only dropped into the middle of the story for the double purpose of assisting Mrs. Gudgeon in her strenuous efforts to provide comic relief, and of lending his yacht to the hero when his health requires a cruise; and he is whisked out of it

again before we have seen as much of him as we should like.

With the style of AYLWIN the reviewers are all very much pleased. "It is written," says THE BOOKMAN, "in flawless English." "The narrative as supplied by AYLWIN is characterised," says THE ATHENÆUM, "by the qualities of narrative at its highest, the qualities by which the great story-tellers have held their readers." Here is a specimen of it.

I returned to Raxton a cripple no longer. I returned cured, I say. But how entangled is this web of our life! How almost impossible is it that good should come unminged with evil, or evil unminged with good! At Margate, where the bracing air did more, I doubt not, towards my restoration to health than all the medicines,—at Margate my brother drank in his death-poison. During the very last days of our stay he caught scarlet-fever. In a fortnight he was dead. The shock to me was very severe. It laid my mother prostrate for months.

So far as my experience goes, this does not hold the reader at all. On the contrary, he finds himself presently offering to bet that AYLWIN has more jerky little sentences in a page than any other novel of the day; and although this wager might create an interest in the work, it would not really be of a legitimate kind. Take again an example of the style at a higher level.

In a few days I left London and went to North Wales. Opposite to me in the railway carriage sat an elderly lady, into whose face I occasionally felt myself to be staring in an unconscious way. But I was merely communing with myself: I was saying to myself, my love of North Wales, and especially of Snowdon, is certainly very strong; but it is easily accounted for—it is a matter of temperament. . . . Much has been said about the effect of scenery upon the minds and temperaments of those who are native to it. But temperament is a matter of

ancestral conditions; the place of one's birth is an accident. . . . And then I laughed at myself and evidently frightened the old lady very much. She did not know that underneath the soul's direst struggle—the struggle of personality with the tyranny of the ancestral blood—there is an awful sense of humour—a laughter (unconquerable and yet intolerable) at the deepest of all incongruities, the incongruity of fate's game with man.

These are fair specimens of the narrative, and most readers will, I suspect, agree with me that THE DAILY CHRONICLE is correct in stating that "the writer's close fellowship with some of the most powerful men of his time, has apparently never touched his style." The passage quoted reminds me less of the great story-tellers of the past than of a popular writer of the present time, who seems likely in the matter of editions to find the author of AYLWIN a dangerous rival. When Henry Aylwin talks, as he often does, to his mother and his aunt ("a commonplace slave of convention" with "an inferior intellect and an insect-soul," as well as a stupid prejudice in favour of dressing for dinner,) of "a flunkey society like this of ours, —a society whose structure political, moral and religious is based on an adamant rock of paltry snobbery," and of "the tyranny of the blatant bugbear called Society," we can hardly fail to recall the impassioned denunciations which were heaped upon the same corrupt, unhappy abstraction in THE SORROWS OF SATAN. And when Aylwin grinds his teeth and mutters, "I am in the toils!"—when he snaps his fingers and says, "*That* for the curse!"—when the painters address each other as *mon cher* and speak of a meeting as a *rencontre*,—when Mrs. Aylwin (a lady with "patrician features") alludes to the despoiler's child with a haughty glance

of ineffable scorn, we are tempted to question THE DAILY CHRONICLE's other assertion that Mr. Watts-Dunton reminds us of no one except Ebenezer Jones.

Nor can I think the creator of AYLWIN always happy in his imagery. When Henry, in the character of the Prince of the Mist, clasps the distracted girl to his breast,—“Dear Prince,” said Winifred, “how delightfully warm you are! How kind of you! But are not your arms a little too tight, dear Prince? Poor Winnie cannot breathe. And this thump, thump, thump, like a—like a—fire-engine—ah!” One hardly requires to be either a poet or an artist, or even to have the critic's firm grasp of the principles of æsthetics, to realise that a fire-engine is an incongruous object to introduce among the mists of Snowdon; but the author is so pleased with the comparison that we meet with it more than once. “But, Henry, you surely are still very unwell,” says Winifred on another occasion. “Your heart is thumping underneath my ear like a fire-engine.” “They are all love-thumps for Winifred,” said he “with pretended jocosity,” “they are all love-thumps for my Winnie.” And when unseen he watches her dancing on the beach (“to amuse poor Snap, who is out of sorts”) “she redoubled her gymnastic exertions, she twirled round with the velocity of an engine-wheel.” Given a lonely shore, a moonlit sea and a Cymric maid, might we not fairly expect some more ethereal picture than Winifred going round with the grace of a bit of machinery and stopping presently to pant?

To many people the fact that some of the characters in AYLWIN are believed to be drawn from the life seems its chief attraction. It was, apparently, a certain doubt as to the morality of this method of bidding

for the popular vote which withheld the author from publishing it sooner ; and if it be true that De Castro is the easily recognisable portrait of a "remarkable man who died some nine years ago," his scruples were not without justification. "It is not to be supposed," says the DAILY CHRONICLE warmly, "that the man who in spite of his qualifications, his right, and it were almost said his duty, has refused to write Rossetti's life, should drag him into a novel to give zest to a narrative otherwise over tame." It would probably never have occurred to anyone to suppose anything of the kind, but it is exactly what has been done ; it would be difficult to describe it more precisely. If those who knew Rossetti best are content with the portrait of him which is presented in these pages, no one else surely need complain ; but in the name of humanity I must protest against the unkind treatment dealt to the other painter, Wilderspin. Mr. Watts-Dunton wished (according to THE ATHENÆUM) to portray in him "an eccentric man of genius, respected and admired and beloved by the men of genius among whom he moved." By a curiously abrupt adoption of the realistic method, he not only allows Wilderspin to bore us, but exhibits him boring everyone else in the book. In common justice the painter should have been provided with at least one sympathetic listener, but his fervid monologues seldom enlist anyone's attention. "'I had few purchasers,' says Wilderspin, 'till Providence sent me a good man and great gentleman, my dear friend—' 'This is a long-winded speech of yours, *mon cher*,' yawned Cyril. . . . 'And so you failed after all, Mr. Wilderspin?' I said, anxious to get away that I might talk to Cyril. 'For God's sake, take the good madman away,' I whispered, 'you don't know how

his prattle harrows me just now.' " These are certainly some of the most lifelike passages in the book, but they do not produce a very strong impression of respect and admiration. Wilderspin's lowly origin is neatly indicated by the care with which he introduces Sleaford's title into every sentence which he addresses to that nobleman.

Much has been said of the high pure teaching of AYLWIN and the author has been warmly welcomed as a champion of the spiritual (or the spiritualistic, as his friends prefer to call it,) against the materialistic view of the universe. To a dispassionate reader, AYLWIN hardly seems to justify these rejoicings. The spiritual outlook which the writer in LITERATURE hails as new and convincing lies mainly, so far as I can see, in the assurance that every man believes in a future life when he stands by the death-bed of the woman he loves, or as D'Arcy puts it, "at that moment he feels he must either accept a spiritualistic theory of the universe or go mad." But this outlook is no new one ; it is probably "as old and new at once as Nature's self ;" it certainly does not date from the 15th of last October. And if any outlook could be "convincing," this, as presented in AYLWIN, would still be nothing of the kind. What theory of the universe did the rationalistic hero accept in the end ? It is impossible to say. There are moments in which he is more than half persuaded of the efficacy of the curse which at first he despised as "a mere collocation of maledictory words ;" and in one of these spasms of credulity he replaces the stolen cross in his father's coffin, urged by Sinfi and D'Arcy who assure him that Winifred cannot recover till this is done. But between Winifred's recovery and the replacing of the cross, no connection can be traced. Her

cure is wrought by no mystic means but by the material aid of a large magnet, and the professors of Salpêtrière appear to convince Henry that his first view was the correct one. "You must not talk of its being a curse, Sinfî," he says; "it was just an illness like any other illness, and the doctor passed it on to you in the same way that doctors do sometimes pass on such illnesses. Doctors can't cure curses, you know!" The reader is thus left uncertain as to whether Aylwin was truly converted to "a spiritualistic theory of the universe" by his temporary belief in the efficacy of the curse; and if so, whether his faith survived the business with the magnet or not. These are subjects on which the novelist should not have left us in the dark, although from a more serious point of view it is not a matter of the least consequence. The belief that failure to gratify a dead man's whim could be avenged by the wrecking of two innocent lives, by the simple means of a written curse laid in his coffin, is hardly less irreligious than the ma-

terialism to which it is opposed. Such a device is better fitted to serve as the ground-work of a Christmas Annual than as a bulwark of the doctrine of the life of the world to come.

In conclusion, it remains only for us, the uninitiated, the common herd, to offer our sincerest condolences to Mr. Watts-Dunton. How it may stand as an optimistic confronting of the cosmogony I cannot say, for I have not the remotest conception what those sounding syllables may mean; but certainly neither as a novel nor as a review of the intellectual movements of the age is it possible to take AYLWIN seriously. Yet it might have passed in the unrecorded crowd that comes and goes through the doors of the circulating library. Those who for reasons best known to themselves have tried to raise it to the rank of a masterpiece have done its author no kindly turn. He has apparently no enemies, or he has been well able to protect himself from them; was there no one to save him from his friends?